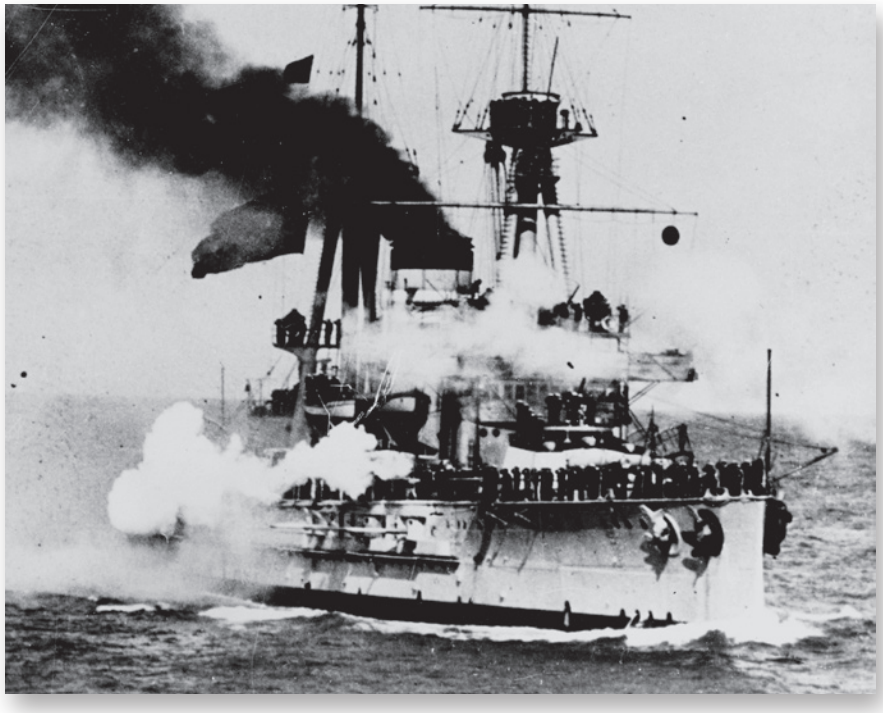
WARSHIPS IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

ANGUS KONSTAM

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL WRIGHT

NEW VANGUARD 300

WARSHIPS IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR



ANGUS KONSTAM ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL WRIGHT

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WARSHIPS IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

INTRODUCTION

Civil wars are often seen as tragic events, dividing nations, regions and even families, and inflicting physical and emotional scars on a country which can often take decades to heal. This was particularly true of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), where the Spanish people were torn apart by political ideology and religion, through duty to the state, loyalty to a movement or even a desire for national self-determination. The conflict also attracted support from outside Spain, making this fratricidal conflict part of a wider ideological struggle between fascism and communism. Of course, the Spanish Civil War was far more complicated than that. At its root was the opposition of reactionary factions within the country to the secular, progressive, democratically elected government of the Spanish Republic.

These largely right-wing opponents might have achieved little were it not for the support they enjoyed from senior members of the Spanish armed forces. Eventually, opposition to the Republic evolved until it coalesced

A colourized view of the Nationalist heavy cruiser *Canarias*, from an original photograph taken in mid-1937. Although based on the design of a British County class cruiser, the funnel uptakes on the Canarias class were banded together, and the resulting large single funnel gave these ships a far more modern, elegant appearance than their British counterparts.

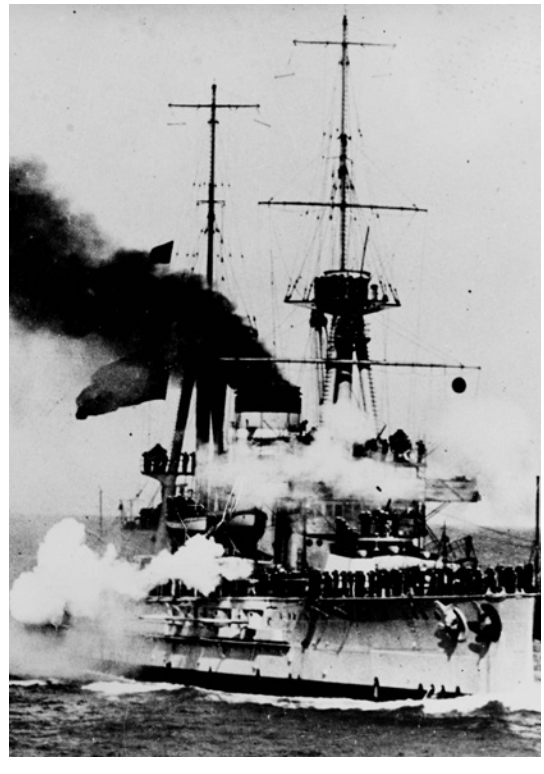
into plans for a military coup. A network of military conspirators from all branches of the Spanish armed forces were involved in this plot, and when they struck, in mid-July 1936, the country was immediately plunged into a devastating civil war. Inevitably, the navy of the Spanish Republic was caught up in this great tragedy. Although a significant number of naval officers had either joined the conspirators or were sympathetic to the insurgents, when the fleet sallied out to prevent the rebel Army of Africa from reaching the Spanish mainland, the crews of most of the warships either arrested or killed any officers who didn't profess their unequivocal loyalty to the government.

However, the rebels – now styled the Nationalists – managed to seize control of the naval bases of Cádiz, Palma and El Ferrol. That meant they controlled the warships which were being built or repaired there, and ensured the Nationalists a small fleet with which to contest control of Spanish waters. This force would later be augmented by naval support from the Nationalists' fascist allies, Germany and Italy. The stage was then set for a naval struggle which was, in effect, a sideshow of the main conflict. Nevertheless, the naval campaign was vitally important, as both sides relied on the importation of supplies and war materiel from their overseas allies. This ensured that the naval struggle would continue right up until the final collapse of the Spanish Republic in March 1939.

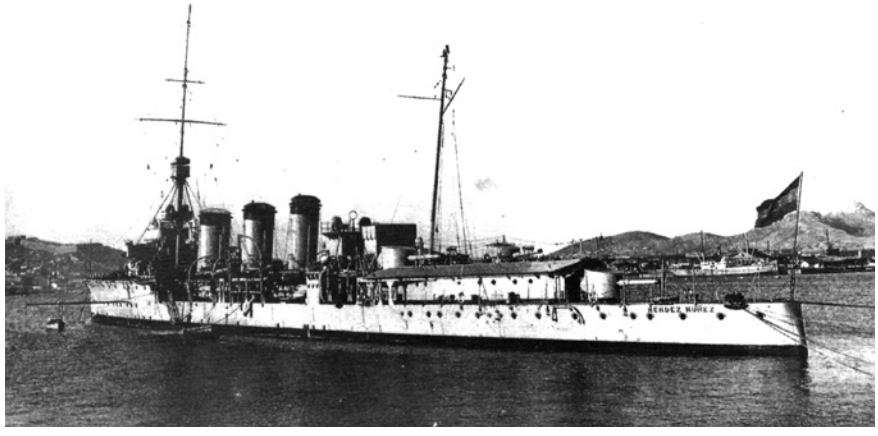
THE PRE-WAR SPANISH NAVY

During the late 18th century the Spanish *Armada Real* ('Royal Navy') was the third largest naval power in the world. At its height it boasted a strength of 72 wooden-hulled sailing ships-of-the-line. However, it paid a heavy price for its support of France from 1796 on, and a series of naval setbacks culminated in its defeat at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805). This was followed by a doomed struggle to retain control of its Latin American colonies, and almost a century of internal political and civil strife. Still, during the latter half of the 19th century Spain embraced the ironclad revolution, and from 1863 it built up a small but respectable force of modern steam-powered warships. Then, in 1898, the USS *Maine* blew up in Havana harbour, and served as America's *casus belli* for a war with Spain. This led directly to humiliating naval defeats off Santiago in Cuba and Manila in the Philippines, and to the loss of most of Spain's remaining colonies.

This was a material and psychological blow from which the *Armada Real* never fully recovered. The rebuilding of the Spanish fleet was a slow process, hindered by a lack of political will as much as a scarcity of money. The rump of the 1898 fleet consisted of the ageing battleship *Pelayo*, plus a handful of cruisers, gunboats and destroyers. The process of rebuilding the fleet began in 1908 with the ordering of three small España class dreadnought



The Spanish battleship *Jaime I*, pictured while firing her secondary guns during an exercise off the coast of Spanish Morocco in 1932. One of her two sister ships, the original *España*, was wrecked off the same coast the following year.



The light cruiser *Mendez Nuñez* was one of two ships in her class, but her sister, the *Blas de Lezo*, was wrecked in 1932. By 1936 the remaining cruiser, pictured here, was obsolete and worn out, and lacked a modern gunnery direction system.

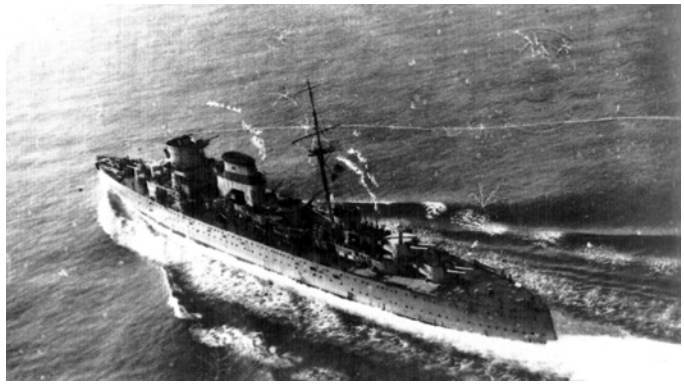
battleships. These were followed by three modern destroyers, four patrol gunboats and a flotilla of 22 small torpedo boats. The smaller vessels were virtually obsolete before they entered service, but two of the battleships, two gunboats and half of the torpedo boats were still in service over quarter of a century later.

The next boost to the fleet came during World War I. While Spain remained neutral, the government approved the expansion of the fleet. Three light cruisers were ordered, as well as three larger modern destroyers, three gunboats and a flotilla of ten submarines. The Spanish had experimented with submarines before – the first being commissioned in 1860 – but these were the first modern boats with any real offensive capability. Of these, two of the cruisers, plus the destroyers, the gunboats and six 'B class' submarines were still in service in 1936. After 1920 the expansion continued, despite the distraction of Spain's badly handled colonial campaign in Morocco. In fact, the navy's expansion plans were too ambitious for the Spanish government, which refused to sanction the building of four more battleships, four cruisers, a dozen destroyers and 25 submarines. Instead, a much more modest programme was adopted, spread over a decade.

By 1921 though, when the third of the España class battleships entered service and three new cruisers were under construction, the *Armada Real* was once again a force with the strength to carry out its mission of defending Spanish waters, and protecting its merchant shipping. Nevertheless, financial constraints continued to dog the service during the 1920s, so further building schedules were extended or delayed. Still, by 1930 a total of eight new cruisers, 16 destroyers and 12 submarines were completed, built or ordered by Spanish yards. This was largely due to the long-running collaboration between the Spanish government and the British shipbuilding firms of Armstrong, John Brown and Vickers – while the Spanish provided new shipbuilding facilities at Cartagena and El Ferrol, the British firms provided expertise in both design and building.

The launch of the cruiser *Canarias* at El Ferrol in May 1931. Her design was based on the British heavy cruisers of the County class, although these had been modified, giving the finished ships a more modern and streamlined appearance.

For example, in 1915 the Spanish government approved the building of three new cruisers of the Alfonso class. These were designed by Sir Philip Watts, the former British Director of Naval Construction, and the builder of HMS *Dreadnought*. These were based on the British D and E class light cruisers of the same era, but modified slightly to suit Spanish requirements. While work on the *Principe Alfonso* began in 1917, the other two cruisers *Almirante Cervera* and *Miguel de Cervantes* were only laid down in 1922 and 1926 respectively. The first two were launched by the El Ferrol shipyard in 1925, and the third in 1928. They were completed between 1925 and 1930. That meant that the whole process from ordering to final completion took 15 years. By then the global recession caused by the Wall Street Crash of 1929 had reached Spain, and further projects were delayed even further. These three cruisers though, were modern warships, and so were important new assets for the fleet.



In this view of the *Canarias*, taken in 1931, her Nationalist air identification mark on 'B' and 'C' turrets can be clearly seen – a diagonal black cross on a white background. A similar device was carried by all Nationalist cruisers during the war.

Then, in March 1928, the Spanish government ordered two Canarias class heavy cruisers. Again, these were based on a design first developed by Sir Philip Watts for the Royal Navy's County class cruisers. However, the plans were modified – the most notable difference being that the Spanish vessels had a single large funnel, which gave them a more modern appearance than their British counterparts. Both were built in El Ferrol by a joint Anglo-Spanish team of naval architects, but again, financial problems delayed construction. The first of the pair, the *Canarias*, was finally launched in 1931, and her sister ship, *Baleares*, followed a year later. Their fitting out though, was a lengthy process, and both cruisers were still incomplete when the Spanish Civil War began in July 1936.

The same lengthy delays also had an impact on the rebuilding of Spain's destroyer flotillas. The first batch of the Churruca class boats were approved in 1915, and, with the exception of one laid down in Cádiz, all of the destroyers were built in Cartagena. They were based on the British Scott class of flotilla leaders, designed in 1916, and so they were thoroughly modern destroyers when they were first ordered. However, as the first batch was only launched between 1925 and 1930, and the second batch of seven more boats followed during the early 1930s, they were considered a little antiquated by the time they entered service on the eve of the Spanish Civil War. Still, they replaced seven obsolete destroyers built for *the Armada Real* before

The Republican cruiser *Libertad* (formerly the *Principe Alfonso*), pictured shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War. Like her three sisters, she was based on the design of a British E class cruiser. She could easily be distinguished from her two sister ships because she was never fitted with funnel caps.

World War I, and augmented the three Alsedo class vessels which entered service during the early 1920s.

The same problem bedevilled the development of Spain's small submarine fleet. The handful of coastal boats laid down during World War I were scrapped during the 1930s, which left the six 'B class' Holland boats (B1–B6), built during the 1920s. All of these were still in service in 1936. By then though, the navy's submarine arm had been augmented by a new batch of six improved Holland boats, designated the 'C class' (C1–C6). All of these entered service shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War. This then, gave Spain a sizeable and fairly modern submarine force, although these boats were considered outdated compared to the latest German and Italian submarines that would soon play their clandestine part in the Spanish conflict. Far less useful were the Vickers-Normand torpedo boats ordered in 1908, and which entered service between 1912 and 1921. These were obsolete when they entered service, and while most still remained in service, they were of no real military value, save for as minelayers or harbour patrol boats.

The other remaining battleworthy element of the *Armada Real* was its flotilla of gunboats. The oldest of these had been built before World War I, but of these only the *Laya* remained in service in 1936. Three larger ones built during the 1920s – the *Cánovas del Castillo*, *Eduardo Dato* and *José Canalejas* – were all still in commission when the Civil War began. During the early 1930s, work began on the Júpiter class of gunboats, which were larger than the Castillo class, and more versatile too, as they were designed to double as minelayers. All four of them though, were only completed after the start of hostilities. Finally, the coastguard maintained a number of small obsolete gunboats, mostly former British armed trawlers. Nine of these were still in service in 1936.

The Spanish Navy also boasted its own air arm. Developed during the late 1920s, by 1936 this consisted of three squadrons of land-based torpedo bombers equipped with 27 Vickers Vildebeests, a bomber squadron equipped with 15 Dornier Do J ('Whale') flying boats, a small fighter squadron of 6 single-seat Martinsyde Buzzards, and three reconnaissance squadrons operating 36 Savoia-Marchetti SM.62 flying boats. The naval air arm also maintained around 20 training aircraft. All of these aircraft were biplanes, and they operated from naval airfields at San Javier near Cartagena, Llobregat near Barcelona, Vigo in Galicia, Mahón on Minorca and Melilla in Spanish North Africa.

A

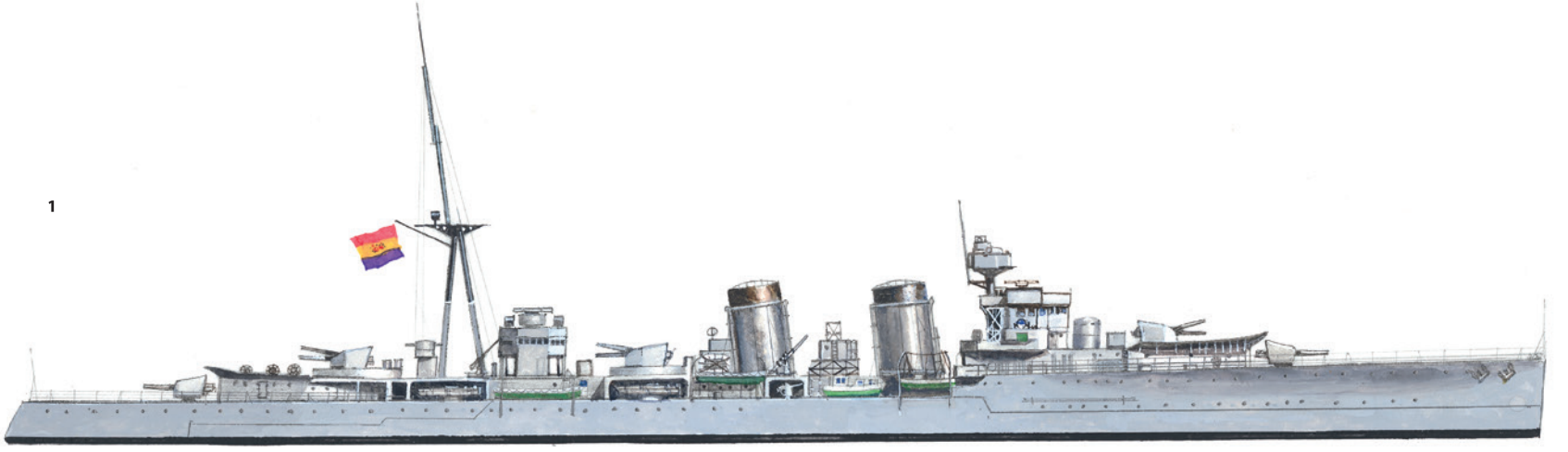
THE REPUBLICANS: THE LIGHT CRUISERS *LIBERTAD* AND *MENDEZ NUÑEZ*

For much of the war, the core of the Republican Navy's main striking force consisted of these two cruisers, accompanied by the *Libertad's* sister ship *Miguel de Cervantes*.

1. Built as the *Príncipe Alfonso*, and the namesake of her three-ship class, the *Libertad* was given her new more egalitarian name in 1931, following the foundation of the Spanish Republic. The design of the Alfonso class was based on the Royal Navy's Emerald class cruisers that were laid down in 1918, but only completed seven years later. The *Libertad* served as the Republican squadron's flagship for much of the war, and saw action in the engagements off Cape Cherchell and Cape Palos. This view of her and the *Mendez Núnez* shows the cruisers as they looked at the start of the conflict. The *Libertad* flies the pennant of the Republican squadron commander.

2. The *Mendez Núnez*, the only ship of her class to remain in service in 1936, was laid down in 1915, having been based on the British C class cruisers which were then entering service. She took nine years to complete though, by which time she was considered virtually obsolete. During the Spanish Civil War her relatively slow speed made her something of a hindrance in squadron-sized operations. She was modernized after the war, when she was rebuilt as an anti-aircraft cruiser, and remained in service until 1963.

1



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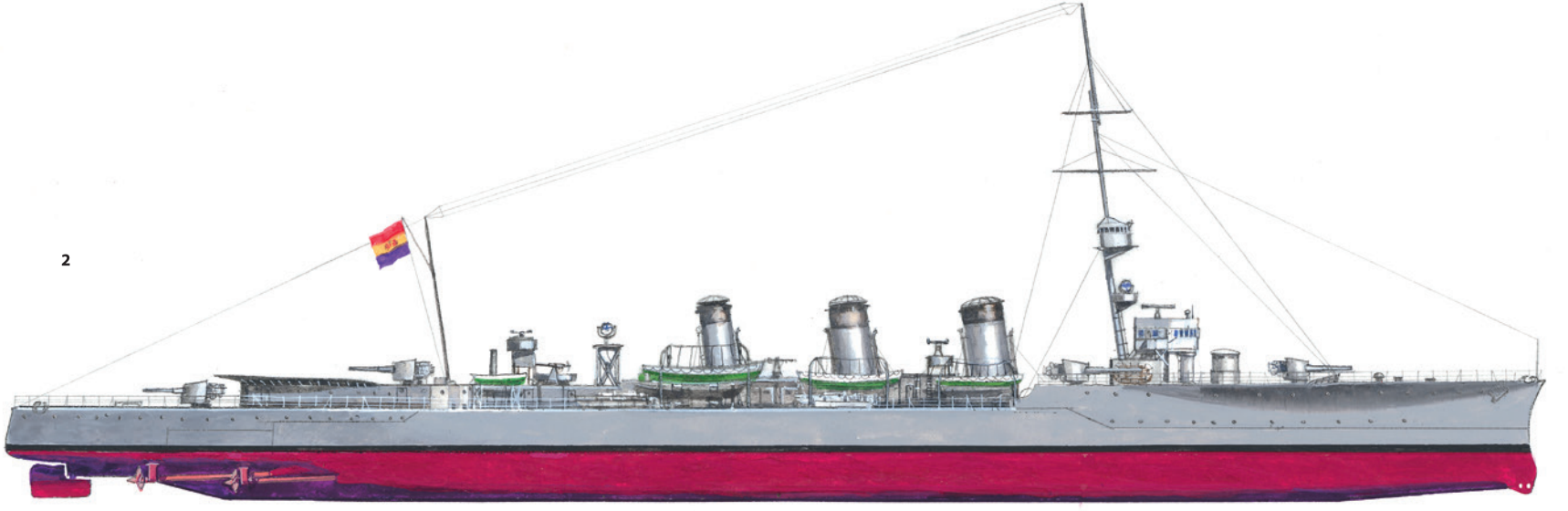


The Spanish battleship *Jaime I*, pictured before the outbreak of the Civil War. At this angle the staggered layout of her main guns is clearly visible. Like several contemporary dreadnoughts, her 'B' and 'C' turrets were theoretically able to fire across her decks, albeit with a very limited arc of fire.

Another string to the Spanish Navy's bow was its force of marines. Founded in 1537, the *Infantería de Marina* ('Naval Infantry') was the oldest force of marines in the world. By 1936 it consisted of around 2,000 officers and men, and despite attempts to disband the corps it was still intact at the start of the conflict. It was divided into three divisions, with one attached to each of Spain's three main naval bases – El Ferrol, Cádiz and Cartagena. Its main task was the defence of these three naval bases, but sizeable detachments also served at sea about the fleet's battleships and cruisers.

The leading Spanish naval base at this time was El Ferrol in the north-west of the country, a port protected by extensive coastal batteries. The base contained the navy's largest dry dock, and the only one capable of accommodating the fleet's battleships or cruisers. As a major shipyard, this base contained excellent repair and refit facilities. There were two other substantial naval bases at Cádiz in the south-west and Cartagena in the south-east. Both had dry docks able to accommodate destroyers and the smaller cruisers, and a limited maintenance and repair capability. The Spanish also maintained a small base at Mahón on Minorca, designed to support submarines and destroyers. A similar small base was created at Vigo in the north-west, 100 miles south of El Ferrol as a satellite of the main base. This though, had very limited facilities, and was primarily used as a training base.

By the summer of 1936 therefore, the *Armada Real* was a small but reasonably well-balanced fleet of battleships, cruisers, destroyers, gunboats and submarines, as well as a number of auxiliary vessels, smaller service vessels such as tugs and tenders, and two sail-training ships. They were crewed from a pool of around 19,000 men, including 1,166 officers. This total included over 1,000 men of the navy's air arm, but not the *Infantería de Marina*, who maintained their own administrative structure. This total also omits the dockyard workers and shipwrights stationed in the navy's ports and bases.

Two Principe Alfonso class battleships of the Spanish Navy, pictured before the war. It was never clear what roles these small capital ships would play in any war, but if nothing else both the *España* and *the Jaime I* proved their worth in coastal bombardment operations during the Civil War.

While many of the navy's vessels would have been considered obsolete by the larger contemporary navies, they still proved useful to Spain as patrol vessels. The sizeable naval air arm gave the fleet a useful maritime reconnaissance capability, even though it was one based entirely on shore, and it had a limited, though as yet unproven, naval attack capability. The *Infantería de Marina* was potentially a useful asset, but many in the new Republican government saw it as a needless colonial legacy. While the force was retained, it was one without any clear role, apart from defending naval bases and providing personnel for stop-and-search boarding actions. Soon though, the entire navy would find itself facing a succession of real challenges as the Civil War tore it apart.

The Principe Alfonso class light cruiser *Almirante Cervera*, pictured shortly before the start of the war. For most of the conflict though, for the purposes of ship identification, she sported a black band around both her funnels, rather than the single thinner white band shown here.

What undermined all the slow naval progress of the 1920s were the growing political divisions within the fleet. Following Spain's military setbacks in Morocco, the country was ruled by a military dictator, General Miguel Primo de Rivera. He held the reins of power from 1923 to 1930, thanks largely to the support of King Alfonso XIII. This repressive regime eventually foundered through a combination of the country's declining economy and a growing lack of public support. Rivera resigned in January 1930, and the abdication of the king in April 1931 paved the way for the creation of a Spanish Republic. Initially, the Republic struggled to please all of Spain's political and social factions, including the Church, as well as the growing desire for autonomy by the Basques and Catalans. Widespread strikes, risings and protests let to growing public dissatisfaction with the Republic's liberal government, which led to the election of a much more conservative one in late 1933.

Their repressive policy towards industrial and social unrest spawned a fresh round of strikes and protests, and the foundation of breakaway republics in Catalonia and Asturias. The government finally collapsed in late 1935, and so fresh elections were held in February 1936. This time the Popular Front gained power – a coalition of Spanish liberals, socialists, communists, anarchists and trade unionists. They pursued a radical agenda which incurred the wrath of the Church, landowners, monarchists and the fascist-nationalist Falangists. Political violence became commonplace, but until this time the Spanish Republic had been held together by a combination of popular support and the Spanish armed services, including the police. Now though, as right-wing opposition to the Republic spread through the officer corps of the Spanish military, a group of senior officers began laying the groundwork for a military coup.

The Republican authorities, however, did what they could to prevent this. Generals suspected of supporting the coup were sacked or sidelined, but it was clear that the plotters were gaining ground, particularly within the Spanish Army, including the forces stationed in Spain's African territories. For its part, the Spanish Navy (now rebranded the *Marina de Guerra de la República Española* ('Navy of the Spanish Republic')) had also become increasingly politicised, with a pro-fascist organisation becoming increasingly influential in senior naval circles, and anti-fascist unions gaining even more ground among the men. So, by the summer of 1936 the navy was every bit as susceptible to a military takeover as Spain's other armed services. When the coup finally began, on 17 July 1936, the navy, like the country as a whole, was torn apart as these rebels tried to assume control of the country through military force.

The *Marina de Guerra de la República Española*, July 1936	
Capital ships	España class (2 vessels): *España*, *Jaime I*
Heavy cruisers	None. The two Canarias class cruisers, *Canarias* and *Baleares*, were still being fitted out in El Ferrol
Light cruisers	Principe Alfonso class (3): *Libertad* (formerly *Principe Alfonso*), *Almirante Cervera*, *Miguel de Cervantes*
	Mendez Nuñez class (1): *Mendez Nuñez*
	Reina Victoria Eugenia class (1): *Republica* (formerly *Reina Victoria Eugenia*)
Destroyers	Alsedo class (3): *Alsedo*, *Velasco*, *Lazaga*
	Churruca class, Batch 1 (6): *Sánchez Barcáiztegui*, *Almirante Ferrandiz*, *José Luis Díez*, *Lepanto*, *Churruca*, *Alcalá Galiano*
	Churruca class, Batch 2 (2): *Almirante Antequera*, *Almirante Miranda*
	One more Batch 1 destroyer (*Almirante Valdéz)*, and five more Batch 2 destroyers (*Gravina*, *Escaño*, *Ciscar*, *Jorge Juan*, *Ulloa*) were being fitted out
Submarines	B class (6): B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6
	C class (6): C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
Gunboats	Castillo class (3): *Cánovas del Castillo*, *Canalejas*, *Dato*
	Recalde class (2): *Lauria*, *Laya*
	Calvo Sotelo class (1): *Calvo Sotelo*
	In addition, four Júpiter class gunboat-minelayers (*Júpiter*, *Marte*, *Neptuno*, *Vulcano*) were being fitted out in El Ferrol
Torpedo boats	T class (11): T2, T3, T7, T9, T14, T16, T17, T19, T20, T21, T22
Patrol vessels (operated by the Spanish coastguard)	Alcázar class (3): *Alcázar*, *Larache*, *Tetuán*
	Uad Kert class (6): *Uad Kert*, *Arcíla*, *Xauen*, *Uad Lucus*, *Uad Martin*, *Uad Muluya*
In addition there were seven small fishery protection patrol vessels of 150 tons, a river patrol boat deployed on the River Miño on the Portuguese border, 27 customs launches, 4 hydrographic survey vessels and various other support vessels (13 tugs, 2 sail training ships, a submarine rescue ship, a mothballed seaplane tender (*Dedalo*) awaiting scrapping and two transport vessels) completed the fleet.	

THE NAVY DURING THE RISING

On 17 July 1936, the day of the military coup, the bulk of the *Marina de Guerra de la República Española* was in the naval bases of El Ferrol in the north-west of the country, and Cartagena in the south-east.

Deployment of major warships	
In El Ferrol	**In Cartagena**
Battleship: *España* (undergoing extensive mechanical repairs)	Destroyers: *Alcalá Galiano*, *Almirante Ferrándiz*, *Almirante Miranda*, *Almirante Valdéz*, *Alsedo*, *Churruca*, *José Luis Díez*, *Lazaga*, *Lepanto*, *Sanchez Barcaizetugi*
Heavy Cruisers: *Canarias* and *Baleares* (still fitting out, and not ready for service)	
Light cruisers: *Almirante Cervera* (in dry dock), *Libertad*, *Miguel de Cervantes*	
Destroyer**:** *Velasco*	Submarines: B5, C1–C6
In Santander	**In Cádiz**
Battleship: *Jaime I*	Light cruiser: *Republica* (mothballed, and not ready for service)
Destroyer: *Almirante Antequera*	
In Mahón, Minorca	**At Fernando Pó (now island of Bioko, Equatorial Guinea)**
Submarines: B1–B4, B6	Light cruiser: *Mendez Nuñez*

In addition, the gunboat *Canalejas* was at Las Palmas in Gran Canaria, *Cánovas* and *Lauria* were in Cádiz, *Dato* was at sea off Ceuta in North Africa, and *Laya* was at sea in the Gulf of Cádiz, between Huelva and Algeciras. Of the 11 obsolete torpedo boats, three (T2, T7 and T9) were in El Ferrol, three (T4, T21 and T22) were at Cartagena, T17 was in Mahón, T19 at Cádiz, T3 at Fuenterrabía (Hondaribbia) near San Sebastián, while T14 and T16 were on patrol off Ceuta. Three coastguard patrol ships (*Alcázar*, *Larache*, *Uad Kert*) were in Cádiz, two in El Ferrol (*Uad Martin*, *Xauen*),

When the rising against the Republic began in July 1936, the crew of the battleship *Jaime I* mutinied against their officers, and seized control of the ship in the name of the Republic. Here, members of the battleship's *Guardia Roja* ('Red Guard') display their political allegiance by giving the Popular Front salute.

two in Spanish Morocco (*Uad Lucus*, *Uad Muluya*), while *Arcíla* was in Tenerife and *Tetuán* in Majorca.

The uprising began in Spanish Morocco and Ceuta. Under the leadership of General Francisco Franco, the veteran Army of Africa declared for the rebels and quickly overcame any loyal resistance. To support the other risings on the Spanish peninsula though, Franco needed to move these troops across the Strait of Gibraltar. While a few could be transported by air, most of the army and its equipment needed to be shipped across. The question was now whether the navy and coastguard's patrols would be able, or even willing, to prevent this. In Peninsular Spain, the rising began the following day, 18 July. The rebels enjoyed success in the south of Spain, as the army units stationed in Cádiz, Seville, Córdoba and Granada all joined the revolt. In the north, the insurgents gained control of Valladolid, Pamplona and Burgos, as well as all of the Balearic Islands apart from Minorca. Madrid, Barcelona, Cartagena and Valencia all remained loyal to the government.

In Spain's north-western province of Galicia the insurgents made considerable territorial gains, and threatened El Ferrol. By then though, the bulk of the fleet was at sea. On 18 July, *Jaime I* and the destroyer *Almirante Antequera* were ordered to raise steam and head to El Ferrol. There they would rendezvous with the cruisers *Libertad* and *Miguel de Cervantes* and then head south, to reinforce the small patrol boats in the Strait of Gibraltar. Once there, they would ensure that the bulk of the Army of Africa never set foot on the Spanish mainland. Similarly, the destroyers *Churruca*, *Lepanto* and *Sánchez Barcáiztegui* would steam from Cartagena to Melilla in North Africa, ready to join the larger ships when they arrived.

When the rising began, the heavy cruiser *Canarias* was still being fitted out in the naval yard at El Ferrol, a process which had all but stalled by mid-1936. This shows the cruiser two years earlier, with her two forward turrets already mounted, and work proceeding on her forward superstructure.

Republican sailors on board the battleship *Jaime I*, amusing themselves while their ship lies at her moorings at Cartagena. One of the reasons the battleship's sorties became more infrequent during the war was the increasing shortage of coal in the Republican sector.

However, with many army units declaring for the rebels, the loyalty of the *Marina de Guerra de la República Española* was far from certain. Many naval officers had known about the coup, and had been planning to seize control of their warships.

Shortly after the northern force left El Ferrol, the crews of the battleship and the two cruisers rose against their officers, and many were killed. On the *Almirante Antequera* though, the officers declared for the Republic, and so were spared. In the three destroyers sent to Melilla, the officers of the *Churruca* persuaded their crew to support the rising, while the reverse was true on the *Lepanto* – both officers and men declared their loyalty to the Republic. On the *Sánchez Barcáiztegui*, the crew murdered their officers, who had attempted to side with the rebels. In Cartagena, swift action was taken by the government, in conjunction with loyal sailors, and any officers whose loyalties were questionable were either imprisoned or killed. So, in the first days of the rising, the bulk of the active part of the fleet remained firmly in government hands.

Meanwhile, in El Ferrol, the insurgents were closing-in on the naval base, which was defended by an ad hoc force consisting of marines, sailors and police. After two days of heavy fighting the base fell to the rebels on 20 July. This meant that the battleship *España*, the light cruiser *Almirante Cervera* and the two unfinished heavy cruisers *Baleares* and *Canarias* fell into rebel hands, together with the destroyer *Velasco*. To help redress the naval balance, the ships' new owners set about preparing them for service as quickly as possible. The small naval base at Cádiz also fell to the insurgents, bringing with it the aged light cruiser *Republica*, but she would need extensive repairs before she could return to service. In the Balearic Islands the military garrison there declared for the rebels, but the island of Minorca remained in government hands, and with it the small naval base at Mahón. This meant that the navy's submarine arm also remained under government control.

By the end of July, the Spanish Republic still controlled most of Spain, including the capital, Madrid, and the key industrial centre of Barcelona. The rebels held Spanish Africa, a southern toehold around Seville, Algeciras and Cádiz, and the cities of Córdoba and Granada. In the north, they controlled a larger swathe of territory, including most of Galicia, Castile, León, and Navarra, as well as parts of Aragon and Extremadura. In the far north, in a strip bordering the Bay of Biscay, the Basques held the eastern portion in the name of the Republic, while to the west most of Asturias too remained loyal to the Republic. Spain was now bitterly divided, and already, in an attempt to seek legitimacy, the rebels were referring to themselves as Nationalists. There would be no swift resolution to the conflict. Instead, Spain would be divided by civil war, and in the fleet, former shipmates would now face each other on the high seas.

The naval balance, late July 1936		
	Republicans	**Nationalists**
Battleships	*Jaime I*	*España*
Cruisers	*Libertad* *Miguel de Cervantes* *Mendez Nuñez*	*Almirante Cervera*
Destroyers	*Alcalá Galiano* *Almirante Ferrándiz* *Almirante Miranda* *Almirante Valdéz* *Alsedo* *Churruca* *José Luis Díez* *Lazaga* *Lepanto* *Sánchez Barcáiztegui*	*Velasco*
Gunboats	*Laya*	*Dato* *Cánovas* *Canalejas* *Lauria*
Submarines	B class (6 boats) B1–B6, C class (6 boats) C1–C6	

COMMAND AND MANPOWER

When the Civil War began, the Republican Navy enjoyed a marked numerical superiority over their opponents. With only one battleship, cruiser and destroyer at their disposal, the Nationalists were forced to carefully husband their naval resources. Strategically though, they had pressing jobs to do, the most important of which was gaining control of the Strait of Gibraltar. They also had to offer what support they could to land-based Nationalist offensives in the north of Spain, and the escort of vital war materiel from their German and Italian allies. Achieving all this was beyond the naval resources at their disposal. In fact, even if men were available, they didn't have the manpower to crew a larger fleet. At the start of the conflict, 6,996 officers and men from the navy sided with the Nationalists, while 12,990 remained loyal to the Republic.

This split of roughly ⅓ to ⅔ of personnel was slightly misleading. Before the coup, it seems the majority of the navy's officers were inclined to support the rebels, even though many wisely kept their own counsel. A number of senior naval officers were members of pre-war right-wing political groups, while others had helped plan the naval part of the July coup. Therefore, in the immediate aftermath of the uprising, the sailors and non-commissioned officers of the

A group of Falangist volunteers, pictured on board the cruiser *Canarias* during late 1938, when the ship was based in Palma. Their backdrop is the cruiser's gunnery director, surmounted by its rangefinder. These were retro-fitted into the two cruisers during late 1936 and early 1937.

The *Comité de Buque* ('Ship's Committee') of the Republican light cruiser *Libertad*, pictured in late 1936, together with the ship's officers. This inevitably led to command problems in the Republican Navy, and eventually the navy limited the influence of the committee to non-operational matters.

fleet were inclined to question the loyalty of their officers. This was why, as the fleet sailed south to blockade the Strait of Gibraltar, the crew of the *Jaime I*, *Libertad* and *Miguel de Cervantes* mutinied, and either arrested their officers or killed them outright. The same happened on board other warships, or in the country's naval bases. Only a handful of officers – most of them fairly junior – openly and convincingly declared their loyalty to the Republic.

The *Jefe de Flota* (Commander-in-Chief of the fleet), *Vice Almirante* ('Vice Admiral') Miguel Mier had been killed on board his flagship *Miguel de Cervantes*, while the navy's Chief of Staff, Vice Admiral Javier Salas was arrested in Madid. As the navy now lacked experienced senior officers to take their place, their posts were filled by relatively junior officers: *Capitán de Fragata* ('Commander') Fernando Navarro was appointed as the new Commander-in-Chief of the Republican Navy, while *Teniente* ('Lieutenant') Pedro Prado Mendizábal became the navy's Chief of Staff. This chronic lack of experienced senior officers would plague the Republican Navy for the remainder of the war. Junior officers were therefore thrust into positions of great responsibility.

For example, *Alférez* ('Junior Lieutenant') Carlos Esteban became the new commander of the *Jaime I*, while *Capitán de Corbeta* ('Lieutenant Commander') Miguel Buiza Fernández-Palacios took command of the *Libertad*. The Republic's submarine flotillas were controlled by *Capitán de Corbeta* Remigio Verdia, while the destroyers were commanded by a mere *teniente*, Vicente Ramírez. To ensure the loyalty of these new ship and flotilla commanders, these warship captains had to share control of their ship with a *Comité de Buque* ('Ship's Committee'), democratically appointed from among the ship's company. The result, of course, was a situation where effective command at sea was difficult to achieve, and decisions had to be discussed before they were implemented.

However, as the war progressed, the Republican Navy came to realise that it had to reform its command structure. For instance, in late 1936, the *Comités de Buque* were disbanded, and replaced instead by a Commissar. Fortunately, the Republic's Defence Minister, Indalecio Prieto, was able to promote promising naval officers on merit, so, in September 1936, Miguel Buiza, who commanded the *Libertad*, became the fleet's *Capitán General* ('Captain General'). However, he proved indecisive, and in September 1938, after a lacklustre performance in action off Cape Cherchell, he was replaced as *Capitán General* by Luis González de Ubieta, who held the post until January 1939. Buiza then held the post again until the final collapse of the Republic, and the internment of the fleet. It helped that both men had a good working relationship with the Fleet Commissar, Bruno Alonso, which eased political pressure on the Republican commanders.

For the Nationalists, the problem was the opposite – too many officers and two few commands. A shortage of enlisted men was eventually made up for through enlistment, and the recruitment of Spanish seamen from the merchant marine. Younger officers, especially cadets, were often retrained as specialist non-commissioned officers for the duration of the conflict. In 1938,

the Nationalists even felt confident enough to reopen the Spanish Naval Academy, to ensure they had sufficient junior officers to help man the expanded fleet after the end of the conflict.

There was no shortage of experienced officers though, as many of these had defected to the rebels during the opening weeks of the conflict. Officers such as *Capitán de Navió* Manuel Vierna Belando, who initially commanded the *Baleares*, Rafael Estrada Arnaiz of the *Canarias* or Ramón Agacino Armas of the *Almirante Cervera*, were all highly experienced, and so could be relied on in terms of ability and leadership. Unfortunately, Manuel Vierna Belando, later promoted to *Contra Almirante* ('Rear Admiral') and commander of the Nationalist cruisers, committed tactical errors that led to his death and the loss of his flagship. On the higher level, the post of *Capitán General* of the Nationalist navy was held by General Franco himself, despite his lack of understanding of naval affairs.

Republican sailors giving the Popular Front salute while manning a 7.6cm (3in) anti-aircraft gun mounted on one of the main gun turrets of the battleship *Jaime I*. The sandbags offer the crew a modicum of cover in this exposed position.

In July 1936, *Almirante* ('Admiral') Luis de Castro Arizcun took over control of the nascent Nationalist fleet in El Ferrol, where he was aided by *Almirante* Juan Cervera Valderrama, who served as the Nationalist navy's Chief of Staff. Its first operational commander, or *Jefe de Flota*, was *Vice Almirante* Francisco Moreno Fernández, who masterminded the Nationalist victory in the Strait of Gibraltar, and went on to supervise Nationalist naval operations in the Western Mediterranean. However, he never had any real control over the Italian submarine 'Legion', which preyed on Republican shipping in this area, although he benefited from it, just as he did from the purchase of several Italian destroyers and submarines.

The final aspect of the naval war which is worth noting here is the degree to which foreign intervention – or non-intervention – played a part. In August 1936, a non-intervention agreement was drafted by the French, and signed by Britain, Germany and Italy, among others. However, the two future Axis powers had little intention of honouring the agreement. Instead, both supplied war materiel to the Nationalists, including tanks and aircraft, and sent troops and advisors too. As early as July 1936 German aircraft transported the spearhead of Franco's Army of Africa to the Spanish mainland, even while German diplomats were agreeing to the policy of non-intervention. The Italians not only supported their Spanish allies by deploying a Corps-sized force of 'volunteers' in Spain, but they also unleashed their submarines, which masqueraded as volunteer (or 'Legion') vessels, purporting to be operating outside Italian military control.

They also provided naval equipment in the shape of four old destroyers, useful as convoy escorts, and two submarines. While officially serving under the Nationalist flag, these vessels were for the most part crewed and commanded by the Italian Navy. Nazi Germany intervened too, sending a force of two armoured cruisers (*Deutschland* and *Admiral Scheer*), and one light cruiser (*Köln*) to the Mediterranean. By late 1937 these were augmented by four U-Boats. In theory these vessels were there to expand the non-intervention patrols operating off the Spanish coast. In practice, they were

The officers of the Nationalist cruiser *Almirante Cervera* during the war. The pool of experienced naval officers available to the Nationalists greatly improved their fleet's operational capabilities during the war.

there to support the Nationalists. In May 1937, the German ships even bombarded the Republican Spanish port of Almería.

The Republicans too, had their ally in the shape of the Soviet Union. From the autumn of 1936, most Republican warships had a number of Soviet naval advisors on board, to provide tactical advice and expertise to Republican officers. Apart from four small motor torpedo boats though, the Soviets never lent the Republic the degree of naval support the fascist powers afforded the Nationalists. Ultimately, the naval war would revolve around the transport of supplies to Spain – Soviet aid and equipment for the Republic, and Italian or German shipments for the Nationalists. Without these, neither side would be able to continue the war. This then, made a mockery of the non-intervention agreement, and worse, British and French warships, as well as neutral ships, were placed in danger merely to prove to the international community that the Spanish conflict was being contained.

THE NAVAL WAR

This was a war neither side was prepared for. The old navy was divided, and the navies of the Spanish Republic and the Nationalist rebels were formed from it. Given the suddenness of the uprising, neither side had the chance to plan a naval strategy. Instead they had to improvise as they went along. Over time however, both navies became more organised. With the exception of safeguarding convoys – a vital role for both sides – the naval campaign was always of secondary importance to the land war.

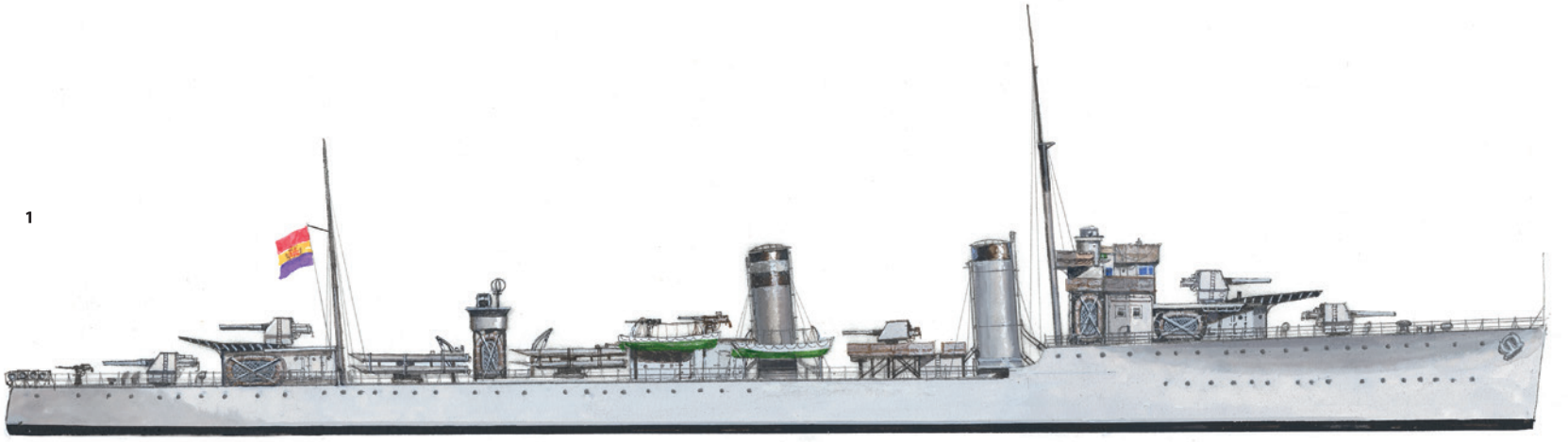
B

THE REPUBLICANS: THE DESTROYER *JOSÉ LUIS DIEZ*, AND THE GUNBOAT *LAYA*

1. The Churruca class of destroyers represented a significant leap forward for the Spanish Navy. They were based on the Scott class of flotilla leaders, which first entered British service at the end of World War I. The Churrucas were built in Spain with British assistance, and first entered service during the late 1920s. A second batch followed, but most of these were still being fitted out when the Civil War began. The *José Luis Diez* was one of the first batch, and like all its sisters it served under the flag of the Spanish Republic. However, she was an unfortunate ship, and achieved little in the naval campaign fought off Spain's northern coast before she was forced to flee to Britain when the last Republican port there fell to the enemy. She rejoined the fight in August 1938, but was twice driven ashore off Gibraltar in the space of four months. This shows her as she looked in 1937, while operating from the Asturian port of Gijón. At one stage the following year she even disguised herself as the British destroyer *Grenville*, to evade Nationalist naval patrols. Here though, she flies the colours of the Republic.

2. The gunboat *Laya* and her sister ship *Lauria* were the last remaining gunboats of the Recalde class. Commissioned in 1911, the *Laya* was built for service in the waters of Spanish Morocco, but proved a less than ideal patrol boat due to her light armament and lack of stability. In July 1936 she was at sea when the rebel uprising began, and so, while her sister ship in Cádiz was captured, the *Laya* was able to reach Tangiers. She was of limited use though, and was largely relegated to the protection of Republican ports. She was finally sunk by Nationalist aircraft in June 1938, while patrolling. This depicts her as she looked during 1937–38, while operating off Spain's Mediterranean coast.

1



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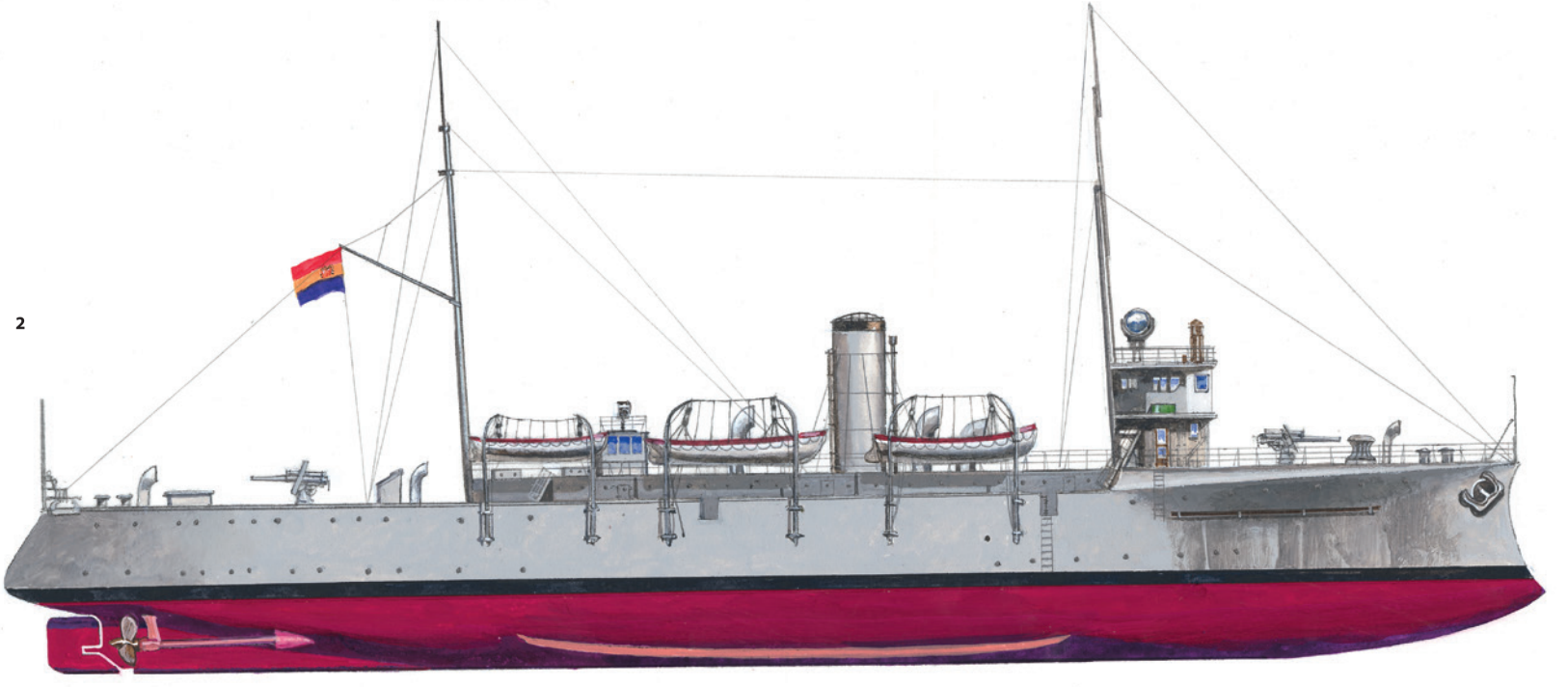


The battleship *Jaime I* alongside in Santa Cruz de Tenerife in the Canary Islands. This photograph was taken in early May 1936, just weeks before the outbreak of the Civil War. By then, the aged battleship was in Santander, on Spain's north coast.

The crew of the *Jaime I* in Tangiers, after taking control of the battleship. She went on to bombard the Nationalist-held ports of Ceuta, Melilla and Algeciras. However, discipline on board would remain a problem for the remainder of the year.

The opening moves

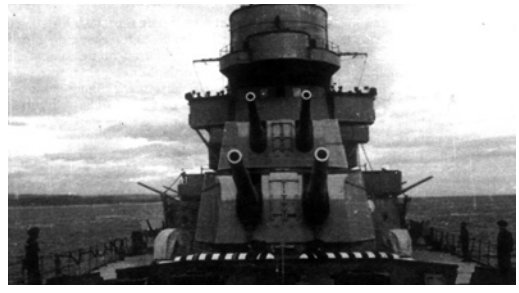
The first priority for the Nationalists was the transport of the 47,000-strong Army of Africa to the Spanish mainland. It had declared wholeheartedly for the rebels. The 120,000 men of the old peninsular army had been divided into two nearly equal sides, so the intervention of these veteran troops would tip the balance strongly in favour of the Nationalists. This was the reason the bulk of the Republican Navy was sent south, to reinforce the small group of patrol boats already on station in the Strait of Gibraltar. In Africa, General Franco only had the gunboat *Dato*, a torpedo boat (*T19*) and the coastguard vessel *Uad Kert* at his disposal in Ceuta, supported by a number of aircraft.

On 5 August, these small warships put to sea, escorting three troop transports carrying 2,000 men and their equipment. Rough seas and poor visibility screened their crossing until they were off Gibraltar. There, they were spotted by the Republican destroyer *Alcalá Galiano*, which exchanged fire with the *Dato*. The gunboat eventually drove off the destroyer, and the convoy reached the safety of Algeciras. The Nationalist press dubbed this *El Convoy de la Victoria* ('The Convoy of Victory'). By the time the bulk of the Republican Navy arrived it was too late, and the *Jaime I* had to be content with bombarding Algeciras and wrecking the *Dato*.

The action then moved to the north, in response to the Nationalist offensive of the war, driving north from Navarra to seal off the Basques from the Franco-Spanish border. On 15 September this was achieved when they captured the port of Irún, to the east of San Sebastián. In El Ferrol, the Nationalists readied the battleship *España* for sea, as well as the cruiser *Almirante Cervera* and the destroyer *Velasco*. Only two of the battleship's turrets were operational ('A' and 'D'). The Republican Navy was sent north again to do what it could to restore the situation. This force, consisting of the *Jaime I*, *Libertad*, *Miguel de Cervantes* and five destroyers, reached Bilbao in late September. By then the Nationalists had been reinforced by the heavy cruiser *Canarias*.

The Republicans also reinforced their fleet by sending five submarines north. They achieved little though, apart from a failed torpedo attack on the *Almirante Cervera*. Then, on 19 September, off Cabo de Peñas near Gijón, the Nationalist destroyer *Velasco* caught the submarine B6 on the surface and sank her using her guns. After that, three of the remaining Republican boats (C2, C4 and C6) remained in port, first in Bilbao and then Gijón, and achieved virtually nothing for the remainder of the war. The fifth submarine, B1, was recalled to Mahón for repairs. Elsewhere in the north, the two sides never met, and finally on 13 October the Republican squadron was ordered back south again. Save for boosting Republican morale, it had achieved virtually nothing. To protect Spain's northern coast, it left behind the three submarines and the destroyer *José Luis Díez*.

Control of the Strait



Delays in manufacturing the 20.3cm (8in) guns of the Canarias class was the principal reason these two ships took so long to complete. While *Canarias*, pictured here in late 1936, had all her guns fitted, she entered service without a working gunnery direction system, or most of her secondary armament.

Operations in the Mediterranean began in August, when the Republicans launched an invasion of the Balearic Islands. The force consisted of a transport, escorted by the destroyers *Almirante Antequera* and *Almirante Miranda* and the submarine B2. It recaptured Ibiza on 9 August, but a landing on Mallorca in mid-August was driven back. Even the arrival of the battleship *Jaime I* failed to turn the tide, and the Republican invasion force was re-embarked. No further invasion attempt was made on Mallorca, which remained in Nationalist hands throughout the war. Minorca and Ibiza remained under Republican control, but, with Mallorca secure, the Nationalists were able to develop Palma de Mallorca as a forward naval base.

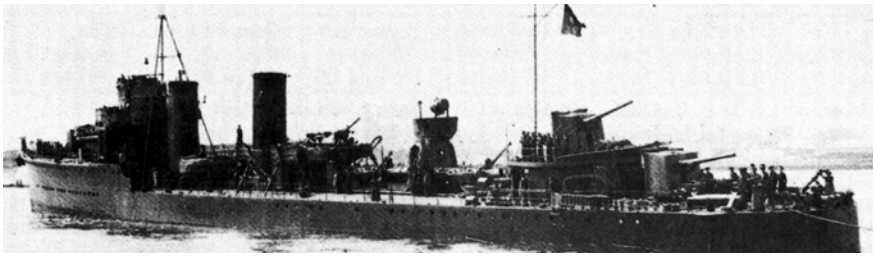
The action now moved south again, when at dawn on 29 September the Nationalist cruisers *Canarias* and *Almirante Cervera* entered the Strait of Gibraltar. They had been sent south from El Ferrol following the return of the Republican squadron to the Mediterranean. Now the intent was to break the Republican blockade of the Strait. There, the cruisers encountered two patrolling Republican destroyers, the *Almirante Ferrándiz* and the *Gravina*, the latter having just entered service. In the brief fight that followed, the *Almirante Ferrándiz* was sunk by the *Canarias*, and the *Gravina* badly damaged. She managed to escape, and eventually reached Casablanca. The Republican blockade had now been broken, leaving Franco free to transport the remainder of his Army of Africa across the Strait.

For their part the remaining Republican destroyers in the area withdrew, first to their forward base in Málaga, and then Cartagena. Despite a probe by the *Mendez Nuñez* and three destroyers, the Republicans lacked the strength to wrest back control of the Strait. Now it was the Nationalists who held the initiative. To prove the point, in early October the two Nationalist cruisers ranged as far north as Barcelona before returning to Cádiz, having refuelled in Palma. They then escorted another convoy across the Strait and sank the two Republican coastguard patrol boats *Uad Lucus* and *Uad Muluya* off Estepona near Gibraltar. Then, on 12 October, Nationalist aircraft sank the Republican submarine B6 off Estepona, as she attempted to approach the Strait.

Until now, the *Canarias* and *Almirante Cervera* had dominated the Strait. However, on the night of 16 October, they almost met their match. Late that evening, the Republican squadron which had been sent south from Bilbao to Cartagena entered the Strait of Gibraltar under cover of darkness. The *Jaime I*, accompanied by two light cruisers and four destroyers, made it through without being detected, despite the presence of the two Nationalist cruisers. Had the two forces met in the Strait that night, the superior firepower of the Republican squadron might well have dealt a major blow to the Nationalist cause.

The Nationalist heavy cruiser *Canarias* refueling in Ceuta harbour in early 1937. During this phase of the Civil War this port provided the Nationalists with a useful haven while maintaining their blockade of the Strait of Gibraltar.

Instead, the *Canarias* survived, and in late October, when the consort



The *Almirante Antequera* was one of the second batch of Churruca class destroyers to enter Spanish service during the 1930s. The Churrucas were based on the British Scott class of destroyer leaders, while the two batches only varied in very minor details, such as the size of the gun shields and their fuel capacity.

returned to El Ferrol for engine repairs, the Nationalist cruiser carried out another sweep into the Mediterranean, bombarding the small port of Roses near the Franco-Spanish border before withdrawing. The Nationalists were making a point, illustrating their ability to challenge Republican control of the Spanish Mediterranean coast. The two Nationalist cruisers repeated the sweep the following month, and this time they bombarded Barcelona before retiring to the safety of Palma. That marked a turning-point in the Western Mediterranean, as it demonstrated the lack of Republican will to dominate these waters. The Nationalists also benefited from outside assistance.

That November, as the fascist governments of Germany and Italy offered recognition and support to the rebels, Mussolini went a step further. He ordered aggressive submarine patrols to begin in the Western Mediterranean, targeting Republican warships and merchant shipping. International legal problems were bypassed by declaring these submarines part of a voluntary *Sottomarini Legionari* ('submarine legion'), similar to the Italian *Corpo Truppo Voluntarie* or CTV ('Corps of Volunteer Troops') which was being assembled to support the Nationalist army. Throughout the war, these submarines were manned and operated by Italy's *Regia Marina* ('Royal Navy'), just as the soldiers of the CTV were part of the regular Italian Army. In all, some 58 Italian submarines would take part in these illegal operations. The attacks began on 22 November when the submarine *Torricelli* torpedoed the Republican cruiser *Miguel de Cervantes* off Cartagena. She remained afloat, and was towed back into port, though would remain out of action until March 1938 when the naval base built a dry dock large enough to accommodate her.

Italian submarine attacks continued throughout the winter of 1936–37. On 12 December, for instance, the Republican submarine *C3* was sunk off Málaga while submerged. Although it was never proved, the single torpedo that sank her was undoubtedly launched from an Italian submarine. The

C

THE BATTLESHIP *JAIME I* BOMBARDING ALGECIRAS, 1936

The main reason the Republican fleet redeployed from El Ferrol to the Strait of Gibraltar was to prevent the veteran troops of the Army of Africa from reinforcing the Nationalists in southern Spain. In the end though, a mixture of bad weather, poor leadership and ill luck meant that these powerful warships weren't able to prevent the 'Convoy of Victory' from reaching Algeciras. This gave the Nationalists the troops they needed to complete their drive on Badajoz, and so unite the two rebel-held regions in the north and south of Spain. In response, on 10 August, the battleship *Jaime I* and two cruisers arrived in the Bay of Gibraltar, and the battleship bombarded Algeciras for over forty minutes. The port was firmly held by the Nationalist rebels, and parts of it were badly damaged by the Republican battleship's heavy guns. Across the bay in Gibraltar, thousands of onlookers watched the bombardment, which achieved little other than the destruction of the sinking of the Nationalist gunboat *Dato*, which had been berthed at the port's main quay. The whole operation though, was designed to show that the Republican fleet was – at least for now - firmly in control of the waters off Spain's southern coast.

A Republican gun crew, manning one of the light cruiser *Libertad*'s single-mounted 15.2cm (6in) guns. Each cruiser carried three twin and two single 15.2cm mountings, each protected by a gun shield.

same day, the *Canarias*, patrolling the Strait of Gibraltar, sank the Soviet freighter *Komsomol*, which was carrying weapons destined for the Republic. While this spawned a furious international incident, the result was that from then on, Soviet aid would reach Spain on neutral ships, rather than Soviet-flagged ones.

So far, since the return of its squadron to Cartagena, the Republicans had achieved very little in the Mediterranean. This was largely due to a lack of effective leadership, as it took time for the fleet's relatively young and relatively inexperienced commanders to master the intricacies of naval operations. Still, in January 1937 their hand was forced by the threat posed to their forward base at Málaga. On 21 January the squadron sortied en masse to bombard Nationalist positions to the west of the port. This sortie had been timed to coincide with the absence of the *Canarias* and *Almirante Cervera*. However, a second, smaller sortie by six destroyers on 6–7 February was unable to save the garrison of Málaga, which capitulated on 8 February.

By then the *Canarias* had been joined by her sister ship, *Baleares*, although the latter still lacked any 'C' turret and gunnery fire control equipment, and her secondary guns had been 'borrowed' from the *España*. Again, despite the two cruisers and the six destroyers being in the same waters at the same time, no night-time encounter took place. However, both sides suffered. The coastguard patrol vessel *Xauen* was captured when Málaga fell, while the *Canarias* was badly damaged in a nocturnal collision with a Greek freighter. After being temporarily patched up in Cádiz, she was towed north to El Ferrol for more extensive repairs. The fall of Málaga though, effectively brought that stage of operations to an end. The Strait of Gibraltar was now firmly under Nationalist control, and their strong naval presence there was augmented by an increasingly powerful Nationalist air force, supported by Italian bombers and fighters.

The Nationalist heavy cruiser *Canarias*, pictured in July 1937 while operating in the Western Mediterranean. The single black band around her funnel was painted on earlier that summer, and remained in use throughout 1938.

The Northern theatre

The return of the Republican squadron to the Strait of Gibraltar in October 1936 reduced the northern theatre to something of a sideshow. In theory the Republican destroyer *José Luis Díez* and three submarines left behind in Bilbao should have been able to deal with the Nationalist naval forces in the region. Instead, inertia meant that these vessels rarely left port. Rather, it was left to the Basques to defend their coast. They created a makeshift force of armed fishing boats, including three large deep-sea trawlers. These ships fought a number of skirmishes off the Cantabrian coast, mainly against the destroyer *Velasco*, but also, on 5 March 1937, with the heavy cruiser *Canarias*, which had returned to sea after a refit in El Ferrol. The *Nabarra*, one of the deep-sea trawlers, was sunk in the running fight, while the merchant ship she was escorting was captured. However, the courage

of the Basque crews was in marked contrast to that of their Republican colleagues.

The most powerful Nationalist warship in the theatre was the battleship *España*. She had been in El Ferrol at the start of the uprising, serving as a barracks ship while her boilers were being re-tubed and her main guns repaired. After capturing the naval base, the Nationalists completed the repairs, and re-crewed the battleship with volunteers, including cadets from the Spanish Naval Academy. These were finished in time for her to sail in company with the *Almirante Cervera* and the *Velasco*, and she participated in their operations off the northern coast of Spain. However, two of her turrets were still non-operational, and she continued to be plagued by mechanical problems. After a spell in dry dock she returned to sea, patrolling the Cantabrian coast, where on 30 October she evaded a torpedo attack by the Republican submarine C5.

The sinking Nationalist battleship *España*, after hitting a mine off Santander on 30 April 1937. This photograph was taken from the accompanying destroyer *Velasco*, which successfully rescued her crew before she sank.

For the next few months *España* would patrol the Cantabrian coast, interspersed by spells in dry dock. It was there, at 0700hrs on 30 April, that the battleship struck a mine. At the time she'd been pursuing a British merchant steamer, and inadvertently strayed into a Nationalist minefield. The detonation ripped a large hole in her port side, flooding her engine and boiler rooms. She began listing heavily, but remained afloat long enough for the destroyer *Velasco* to take off all of her crew. All the time, the Nationalist ships were being harried by Republican aircraft. At 0830hrs the battleship finally capsized and sank. Three men had been killed outright by the explosion, while a fourth died of his injuries. This was a serious loss for the Nationalists, made all the more bitter as it was one which was self-inflicted.

The Nationalist squadron in the north now consisted of the cruiser *Almirante Cervera*, sent north following a refit in El Ferrol, the destroyer *Velasco*, and the new gunboat-minelayer *Júpiter*, which was completed in January 1937. The auxiliary cruisers (armed merchantmen) *Ciudad de Valencia* and *Domine* augmented this small force. As before the loss of the *España*, their main task was the blockade of the Cantabrian coast, although where possible they also supported the Nationalist troops surrounding this Republican and Basque enclave. Their only near setback came on 13 May, when during a rare sortie the Republican submarine C6 encountered the *Almirante Cervera*, and launched two torpedoes at her. One of them hit, but it failed to detonate. By then though, it was clear that the Basque Republic was in its death throes.

The Basque capital of Bilbao fell on 19 June 1937, and the remainder of the Basque and Republican naval forces withdrew to Gijón, 120 nautical miles to the west. However, the Republican destroyer *José Luis Díez* withdrew all the way to Falmouth in Cornwall, while the submarines C2 and C4 escaped to Brest and Bordeaux. Santander fell to the Nationalists on 26 August, and their troops then drove west towards Gijón. By then another Republican destroyer, the *Ciscar*, had arrived there to bolster the port's naval defences. On 19 October, as Nationalist troops reached the port's outskirts, she slipped out to sea, only to be attacked and sunk by enemy aircraft. When the port fell two days later, the crew of the submarine C6 scuttled their boat before surrendering.

The *Almirante Cervera* during the early 1930s, before she received her distinguishing funnel caps. In later 1936, the cruiser was dubbed *El Chulo del Cantábrico* by the Nationalist press, which loosely translates as 'The Beau of the Cantabrian coast'.

Both the *Ciscar* and the C6 would be salvaged by the Nationalists, and after repairs in El Ferrol they were added to the Nationalist fleet. With the scuttling or loss of the last Basque warships, this marked the end of naval operations in the north. However, there would be a brief postscript. The two submarines C2 and C4 were repaired in France, and after an epic voyage around the Iberian peninsula they reached Cartagena in June 1938. The *José Luis Díez* was also refitted in France, then made the run to Cartagena. However, on 25 August she encountered the *Canarias* while trying to run through the Strait of Gibraltar. She was damaged and forced to beach on the tip of Europa Point, beneath the rock of Gibraltar.

She was repaired in Gibraltar, and on 29 December she made another attempt. Instead, she was chased and rammed by the Nationalist gunboat-minelayer *Vulcano*. The Republican destroyer was beached just to the east of Gibraltar, and was subsequently salvaged by the British, and handed over to the Nationalists after the conflict. The collapse of Republican and Basque resistance in the north of Spain meant that the Nationalists were able to concentrate all their naval resources in the Mediterranean. It was there, during 1937–38, that the naval campaign would run its increasingly inevitable course.

The Mediterranean theatre

By the time the *Canarias* returned to the Mediterranean in mid-March, the whole tenor of the campaign had changed. By now the Nationalist squadron was based in Palma, leaving the defence of the Strait of Gibraltar to lighter

D

THE NATIONALISTS: THE BATTLESHIP *ESPAÑA* AND THE HEAVY CRUISER *CANARIAS*

1. The 'naval revolution,' which started with the launch of *Dreadnought* in 1906, reached Spain two years later when the government approved the building of three small 'dreadnoughts'. These were the smallest dreadnoughts ever constructed as their size was determined by Spain's dry dock capacity. When the original *España* was wrecked off the Moroccan coast in 1923, her sister ship *Alfonso XIII* assumed the name of the lost battleship. When the Civil War erupted in July 1936, she was undergoing a refit, and so was unable to join the Republican fleet. Instead she was captured by the Nationalists, and so served under their flag until her loss in April 1937. This view of the *España* shows her as she looked at the start of that year, when operating off Spain's northern coast. While powerfully armed, with eight 30.5cm (12in) guns in four twin turrets, two of these were poorly placed, having to fire over the decks on a limited arc. However, her guns were put to good use by the Nationalists in providing naval fire support for their army in their operations along the Cantabrian coast.

2. When the war began the *Canarias* and her sister ship *Baleares* were still fitting out in El Ferrol. So, after their capture by the Nationalists they were commissioned into their small navy, and thereafter formed the core of the Nationalist fleet. Their design had been based on the British heavy cruisers of the Kent class, but these had been modified, most noticeably by the trunking of their boiler uptakes into one large funnel. This gave the *Canarias* and her sister a sleek, modern look. The *Canarias* saw extensive service throughout the war, and remained in service until 1975. Here, she is shown as she looked in 1937, while based in Palma de Mallorca.

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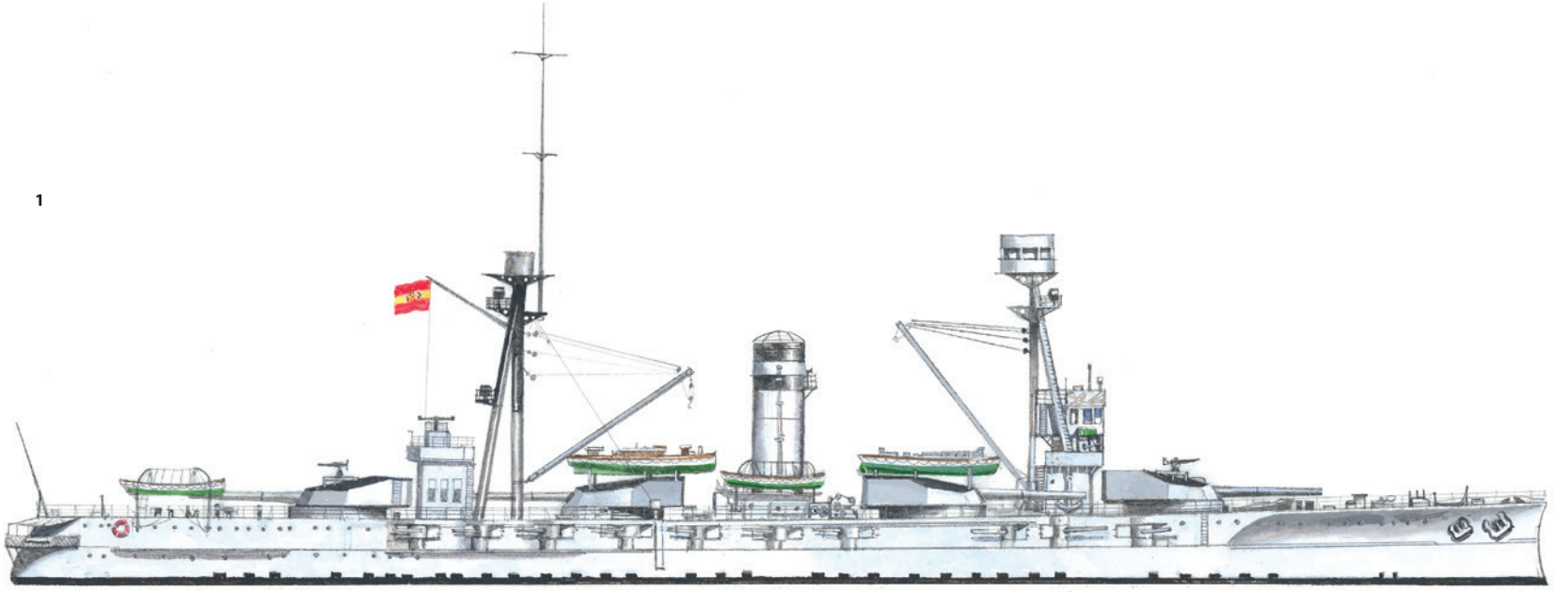

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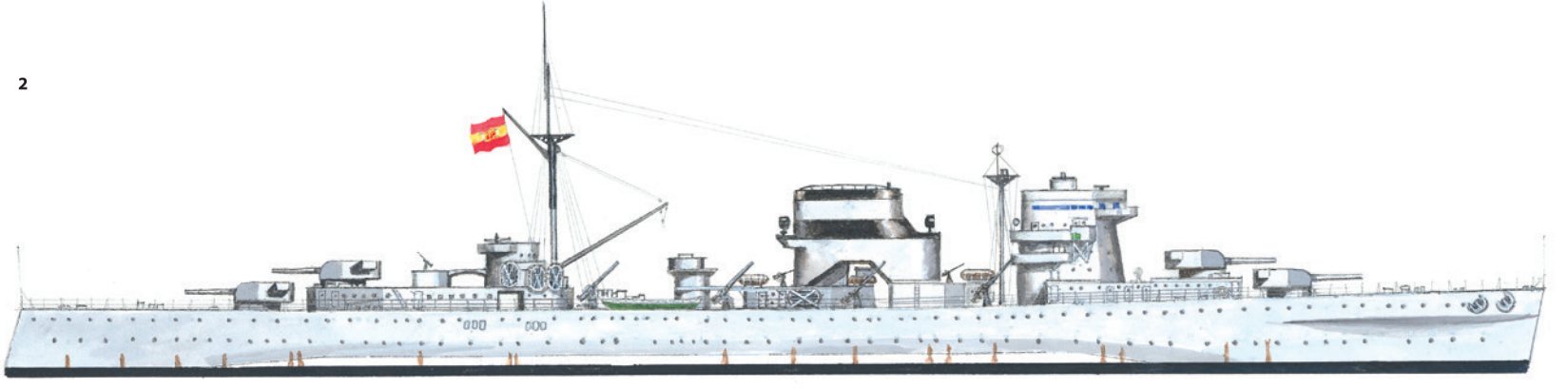
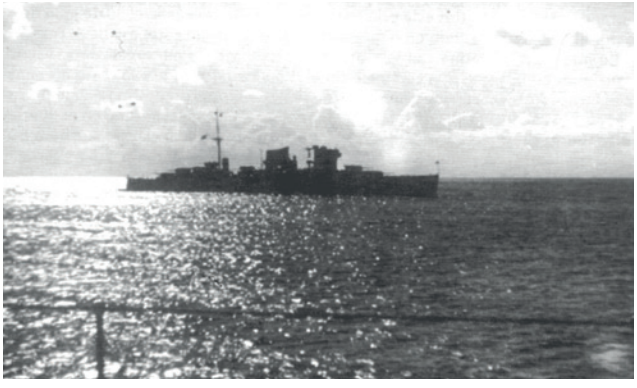




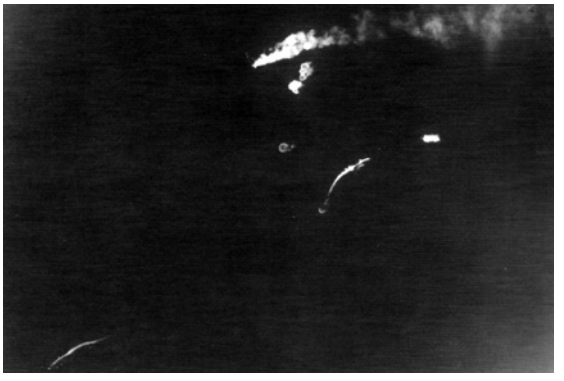
The cruiser *Baleares*, highlighted by the setting sun while returning to Palma from a convoy escort mission in late 1937. The photograph was taken from the *Almirante Cervera*. At the time the *Canarias* was stationed off the *Cervera*'s starboard quarter.

units, backed by air power. The fleet's main task was now the escorting of Italian troop and supply convoys to friendly ports in southern Spain. Mallorca was well placed for these operations, hence the relocation of the *Baleares* and *Almirante Cervera* to Palma. The arrival of the *Canarias* allowed the *Almirante Cervera* to return to El Ferrol for a much-needed refit.

During these first months of 1937 it wasn't just the Nationalists who had been busy protecting convoys. The Republican squadron was similarly employed, escorting merchantmen carrying Soviet aid into Cartagena or Barcelona. The two forces never crossed paths at sea, as the Nationalist commanders remained wary of the *Jaime I*, and so ensured their convoys kept well to the south of Cartagena. In between escort duties, the Republicans were now making occasional sweeps in an attempt to intercept these Nationalist convoys. It was during one of these, on 15 April, that the *Jaime I* ran aground off Almería. She was re-floated and towed back to Cartagena, where she underwent repairs in the port's cramped dry dock. On 21 May, after being re-floated, she was attacked by five Italian SM-79 medium bombers, who made two attacks, dropping a total of 60 bombs. She was hit by two or three of them, but these only caused minor damage. This, however, meant further repairs.

It was during these repairs that disaster struck. The exact cause of it is unclear. In any case, in the early afternoon of 17 May an internal explosion tore the heart out of the battleship, causing secondary explosions. Anywhere between 200–300 men were killed in the blast, and hundreds more injured. The old battleship sank in shallow water. She was raised again, but her damage proved too extensive for the limited facilities in Cartagena to cope with, so she remained moored there until the end of the Civil War. In the space of just over six weeks, the old Spanish Navy had lost both of its battleships.

The Nationalist squadron under air attack from Republican bombers in the Western Mediterranean, in early 1938. At the top of the picture is the cruiser *Baleares*, making smoke, with shell splashes nearby indicating near misses, while below her are two Nationalist destroyers, also manoeuvring at high speed.



Still, the fight continued. In the Mediterranean both sides had to protect their convoys, but now the Republicans had no effective antidote to the two Nationalist heavy cruisers based in Palma. The Republicans moved the cruiser *Mendez Nuñez* to bolster the port's defences, but this did little to lessen the threat. In August, the *Baleares* single-handedly attacked a small convoy defended by five Republican destroyers, damaging three of them before the convoy escaped. Then, on 7 September, the same cruiser attacked another small convoy off Cape Cherchell in Algeria, escorted by the cruisers *Libertad* and *Mendez Nuñez*. Once again, the convoy escaped, but in the brief exchange of fire at ranges of 7–8 nautical miles both the *Baleares* and the *Libertad* were slightly damaged. Although described as the Battle of Cape Cherchell, this was nothing more than a running skirmish.

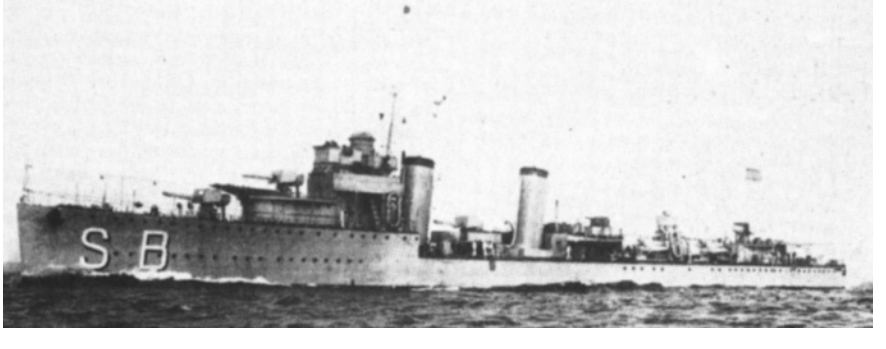
It also remained the only real clash for several months. The clandestine attacks by Italian 'Legionary' submarines continued until the summer of 1937. By then, international

disapproval led to the holding of a diplomatic conference at Nyon in Switzerland. This led to an agreement, in mid-September, that Britain and France would jointly patrol the Western Mediterranean, and would actively attack non-Spanish submarines attempting to attack shipping bound for Spain. In response, the Italians temporarily withdrew their submarines, but found other ways to support the Nationalists. First, four Italian submarines were transferred to their control, still with their Italian crews, and were based in Palma. Then, between October and December, four old World War I-vintage destroyers were sold to Franco's regime, and were duly renamed the *Ceuta, Huesca, Melilla* and *Teruel*. Although obsolete, these proved useful as convoy escorts.

A colourised photograph of the *Baleares*, pictured at anchor off Palma in late summer 1937. In late December 1936, she entered service with only her forward turrets installed and operational. Her aftermost 'Y' turret was installed the following January, while her fourth, 'X' turret, was fitted in July. For the first half of the year she carried fake wooden barrels in 'X' turret, in place of real guns.

These convoys continued, but bad weather during the late autumn and winter prevented any further clashes. In fact, it was the worst recorded winter weather in Spain for two decades. On 22 January 1938, the three Nationalist cruisers bombarded Valencia, and in return the *Almirante Cervera* was slightly damaged in a Republican air attack. However, it was not until early March that the rival fleets would cross paths again. The Republicans planned a raid on Palma, using three former Soviet motor torpedo boats (TB11, 22 and 23), but bad weather led to the operation being aborted, and the three boats returned to Cartagena, escorted by four Republican destroyers.

The rest of the Republican squadron had sortied to provide a covering force for the raid, and at 0030hrs on 6 March 1938, off Cartagena, they encountered the Nationalist squadron, which had put to sea the day before to escort two merchantmen. The Republican force consisted of the cruisers *Libertad* and *Mendez Nuñez* and five destroyers (*Almirante Antequera*, *Gravina*, *Lazaga*, *Lepanto* and *Sánchez Barcáiztegui*). For their part the Nationalist squadron was made up of the heavy cruisers *Baleares* and *Canarias*, the light cruiser *Almirante Cervera*, three destroyers (*Huesca*, *Teruel* and *Velasco*), plus two gunboat-minelayers (*Júpiter* and *Neptuno*). The *Sánchez Barcáiztegui* immediately launched a spread of two torpedoes at the *Baleares*, but as the target combed the tracks these missed. After that

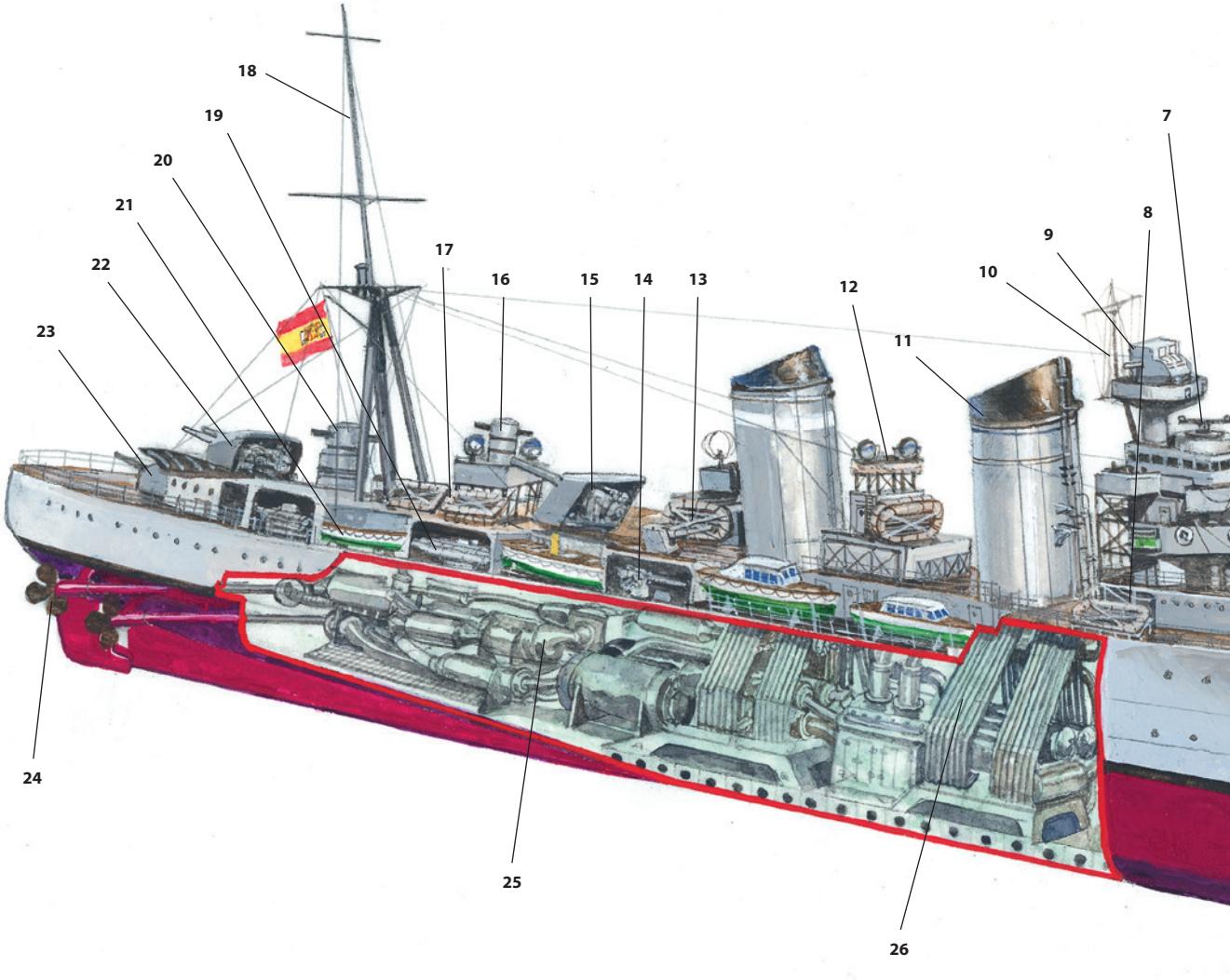


The *Sánchez Barcáiztegui* was one of the first batch of Churruca class destroyers to enter service, and during the war she operated under the Republican flag. In March 1938, she was one of the three destroyers to torpedo and sink the Nationalist cruiser *Baleares*.

E

THE NATIONALIST LIGHT CRUISER *ALMIRANTE CERVERA*, 1937

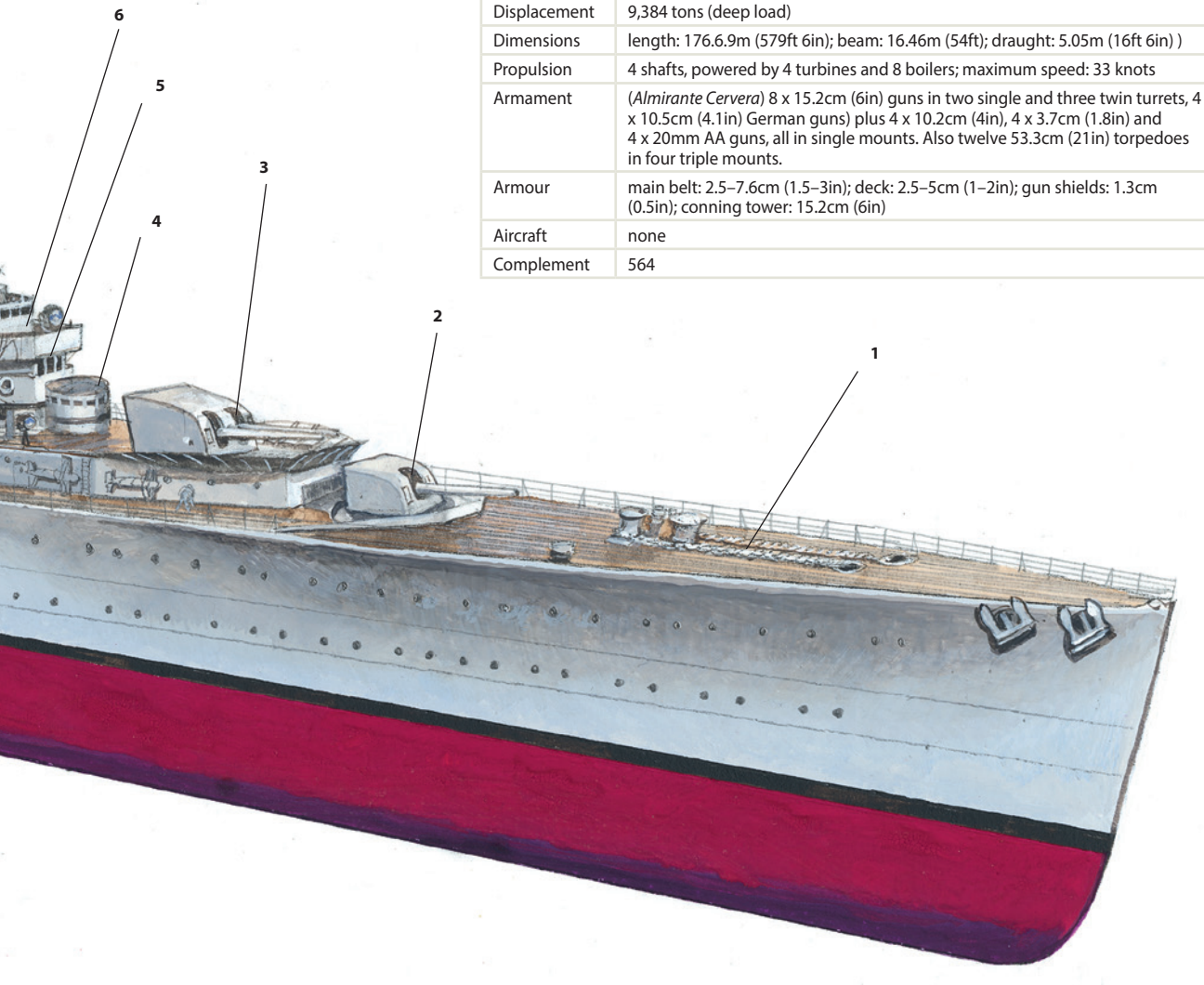
Like the *Libertad* (Plate A), the *Almirante Cervera* was a Principe Alfonso class light cruiser. However, in July 1936 she was still undergoing a refit when the country erupted in Civil War, and so she was left behind when the bulk of the Republican fleet quit El Ferrol. She was captured there, and so returned to active service on the Nationalist side. The design of the class had been based on the two fast Emerald class cruisers built for the Royal Navy in the aftermath of World War I. This though, had been modified by altering the layout of the propulsion system, and her ordnance. As a result, the Nationalist cruiser was armed with a mixture of British, German and Italian-designed ordnance. During the war the *Almirante Cervera* operated off Spain's North coast, in the Straits of Gibraltar and in the Western Mediterranean, making her one of the most actively engaged warships of the conflict. She could be distinguished from her Republican sister ships by her funnel caps, a feature she retained after the war. This venerable cruiser remained in service until the mid-1960s.

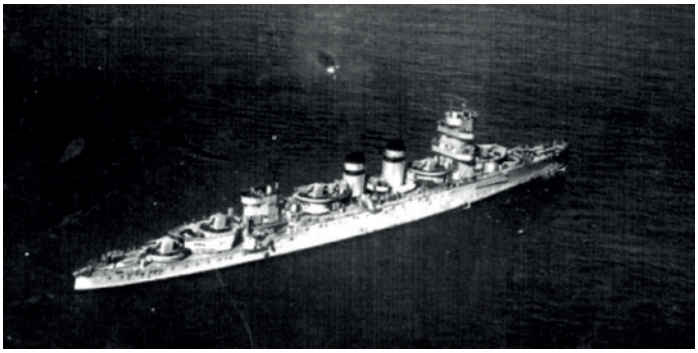


Key

1. Forecastle
2. 'A' mount - single 15.2cm (6in) gun
3. 'B' mount - twin 15.2cm (6in) gun
4. Conning tower
5. Bridge
6. Admiral's bridge
7. Main gun director and rangefinder
8. Single 20mm AA gun (one of four)
9. Anti-aircraft gun director
10. Foremast
11. Funnel and uptakes (one of two sets)
12. Searchlight platform
13. 10.5cm (4.1in) gun (one of four)
14. 10.2cm (4in) AA gun (one of four)
15. 'Q' mount - twin 15.2cm (6in) gun
16. After main gun director
17. Single 37mm AA gun (one of four)
18. Mainmast, with Nationalist ensign
19. Three 53.3cm (21in) torpedo tubes in a triple mount (one of four)
20. After secondary armament director
21. Ship's boat (one of eight)
22. 'X' mount - twin 15.2cm (6in). gun
23. 'Y' mount - single 15.2cm (6in). gun
24. Propeller shafts (one of four) and rudder
25. Engine room (one of four)
26. Boiler room (one of four)

Principe Alfonso class light cruiser *Almirante Cervera*	
Built	El Ferrol
Laid Down	1922
Launched	1926
Completed	1927
Displacement	9,384 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 176.6.9m (579ft 6in); beam: 16.46m (54ft); draught: 5.05m (16ft 6in))
Propulsion	4 shafts, powered by 4 turbines and 8 boilers; maximum speed: 33 knots
Armament	(*Almirante Cervera*) 8 x 15.2cm (6in) guns in two single and three twin turrets, 4 x 10.5cm (4.1in) German guns) plus 4 x 10.2cm (4in), 4 x 3.7cm (1.8in) and 4 x 20mm AA guns, all in single mounts. Also twelve 53.3cm (21in) torpedoes in four triple mounts.
Armour	main belt: 2.5–7.6cm (1.5–3in); deck: 2.5–5cm (1–2in); gun shields: 1.3cm (0.5in); conning tower: 15.2cm (6in)
Aircraft	none
Complement	564





The obsolete cruiser *Republica* (formerly the *Reina Victoria Eugenia*) was mothballed in Cádiz when the conflict began. She was subsequently rebuilt, and joined the Nationalist fleet as the modernised cruiser *Navarra*, pictured here in the Strait of Gibraltar, 1938.

both squadrons lost sight of their opponents.

At 0230hrs, the *Baleares* fired off a star shell, which illuminated three Republican destroyers – the *Almirante Antequera*, *Lepanto* and *Sánchez Barcáiztegui*. It also lit up the Nationalist cruiser. Each destroyer launched a spread of four torpedoes before turning away. Three of these hit their target, and the *Baleares* began listing heavily. With that, the rest of the Nationalist squadron broke off the action, hoping to avoid a similar fate. At dawn, a Republican air strike arrived to finish off the stricken cruiser, but it had already sunk, taking the fleet commander *Contra Almirante* Vierna and 790 of her crew down with her. Two British destroyers were there, picking up survivors, and these were duly attacked by accident. Fortunately no hits were scored. The 469 survivors were eventually transferred to the *Almirante Cervera*, which had been searching for the *Baleares*. This was a notable victory for the Republican Navy, but it did little to alter the Republic's rapidly declining fortunes.

An ignominious end

By the start of 1938 it was clear that on land the Nationalists were in the ascendant. The previous summer the Republicans had counter-attacked at Teruel, where a Nationalist salient to the south of Zaragoza threatened to spit the remaining Republican territory in two. This was one of the bloodiest battles of the war, but by February 1938 the Nationalists had regained all of their lost ground. In March, Franco launched his Aragon offensive, which, by April, resulted in the Nationalists reaching the Mediterranean coast between Barcelona and Valencia. The republic was now cut in two. Meanwhile, the Republican Navy became increasingly reluctant to put to sea, partly due to shortages of fuel and munitions, but mainly due to political discord. From the summer of 1938, therefore, the Nationalists were virtually given free rein to consolidate their naval control of the Western Mediterranean.

The loss of the *Baleares* in March had been a setback, but the Nationalists had a replacement of sorts. In late 1937, the old light cruiser *Republica*,

F

THE NATIONALIST HEAVY CRUISER *BALEARES* AT THE BATTLE OF CAPE PALOS, 1938

For much of the winter of 1937–38, both the Republicans and the Nationalists deployed the bulk of their warships in the Western Mediterranean, protecting the convoys that brought overseas military aid to Spain. During these operations, the Nationalists based their powerful cruiser squadron in Palma de Mallorca. At its heart were the two heavy cruisers *Baleares*, flagship of Contra Almirante Manuel de Vierna y Belando, her sister ship *Canarias*, and the light cruiser *Almirante Cervera*. A chance meeting with the Republican squadron led to a confused night action off Cape Palos near Cartagena. During the battle, Vierna's ships fought a gunnery duel with two Republican light cruisers, until a misfired star shell accidentally illuminated the nationalist flagship. Vierna's rival Luis González de Ubieta ordered his destroyers to make a torpedo run. Three of them launched a combined salvo of 12 torpedoes, at a range of around 2,000m. At least two of them struck the *Baleares*, blowing most of her bows off. She sank during the night, taking the admiral and most of her crew with her. This scene shows the torpedo attack, with the *Baleares* trying to evade the salvo by turning hard to starboard. Moments later two torpedoes would strike her between 'A' and 'B' turrets.

Nationalist troops preparing to disembark from the cruiser *Almirante Cervera*, during the amphibious invasion of Minorca in February 1939. The cruiser supported the operation, but as the island's Republican garrison had already surrendered, her firepower wasn't required.

which had been languishing in Cádiz, was towed to El Ferrol for what amounted to a major rebuild. She emerged from it the following spring as a modern cruiser, armed with six 6in guns. Having been renamed the *Navarra*, she was sent to the Mediterranean to replace the *Baleares*. Her arrival in April allowed the *Canarias* to return to El Ferrol for a much-needed refit, and when she re-joined the fleet in June it was the turn of the *Almirante Cervera*. These refits wouldn't have been possible if the Republican squadron had been more active during the summer.

In June 1938, the Republicans launched a last-ditch effort to turn the tide of war. The Ebro Offensive, launched to the south of Barcelona, was designed to drive Franco's troops back from the coast, and so restore the unity of the Republic's remaining territory. Instead, it turned into a battle of attrition, and a Nationalist counter-offensive from August to November threw the Republicans back over the River Ebro. The Republic remained divided, and its fate was sealed. In late December, Franco launched a whirlwind attack on Catalonia, and on 26 January 1939, Barcelona fell to his troops. The Republican garrison of Minorca mutinied, and on 9 February the island was occupied by the Nationalists, an operation supported by the three Nationalist cruisers and three destroyers. With it came the prize of Mahón. That left Cartagena as the only remaining Republican naval base in the country.

On 27 February, Britain and France recognized the Nationalist regime, turning their backs on the dying Republic. In early March, as Franco's troops prepared to overrun what remained of the Republic, Cartagena's garrison rose in revolt. The rising on 5 March was encouraged by Nationalist *agents provocateurs*, and coincided with a Nationalist air raid which saw two destroyers damaged. It was clear to Admiral Buiza that the base was no longer tenable. On 6 March, he ordered his remaining operational ships – three cruisers, eight destroyers and a submarine – to put to sea. Two days later the Republican fleet arrived off the naval base of Mers el Kebir in French Algeria. Buiza was then redirected to Bizerta in Tunisia, where his fleet was interned, and its men imprisoned.

The red, yellow and purple flag of the Spanish Second Republic, the country's national flag from 1931 until the fall of the Republic in early 1939. This large version is shown flying from the foremast of the battleship *Jaime I* shortly after the start of the Civil War.

On 7 March, the Nationalists attempted to land troops in Cartagena, to assist the uprising. This was supported by the *Canarias*, two destroyers and three gunboat-minelayers. However, the coastal batteries there were manned by Republican loyalists, who kept the enemy warships at bay. They also sank a transport ship crowded with Nationalist troops. Simultaneously, a Republican counter-attack finally managed to crush the rising. This though, came too late for the Republican fleet, which was already in North Africa. A little over two weeks later, on 26 March, the Nationalists resumed their offensive, and two days later Franco's troops occupied Madrid. Thousands of refugees gathered in Valencia and Cartagena, but without the fleet their evacuation was impossible. On 31 March, Cartagena fell, one of the last pockets of resistance to do so.

Finally, on 1 April, Franco proclaimed the end of the conflict. For many though, peace brought nothing but imprisonment, repression and death. In the end the naval war ended with a whimper rather than a bang. It had always been seen as secondary to the land campaign, but

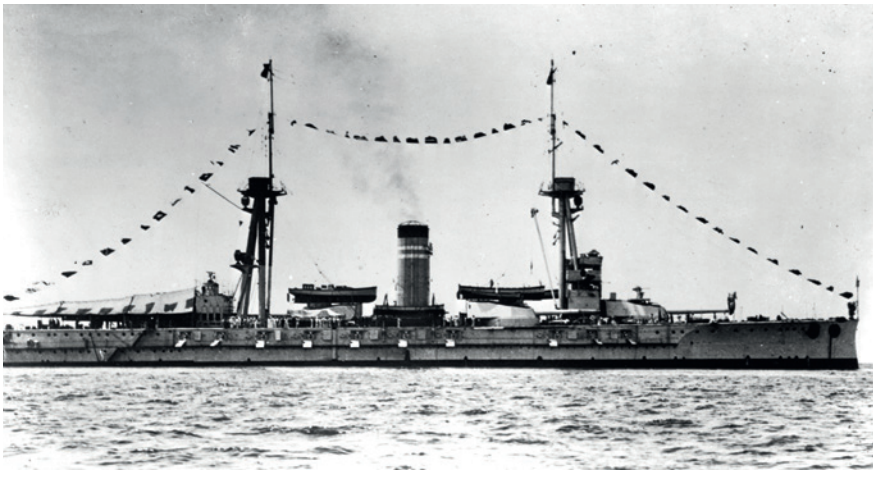
it was nevertheless a vital component of the war. Without it, and the supplies it helped escort into the country, the Republic would have been hard-pressed to resist the Nationalists for so long. Similarly, it was largely thanks to foreign aid – primarily from Germany and Italy – that Franco's troops were able to achieve their hard-won victory in Spain. While the naval campaign lacked the glamour and decisive naval clashes of the world war which followed, it still demonstrated the importance of sea power, both in keeping sea routes open, and starving the enemy of the war materiel it needed to continue the fight.

SPECIFICATIONS

Battleships
España class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
España (formerly *Alfonso XIII*)	El Ferrol	February 1910	May 1913	August 1915 as *Alfonso XIII*	Renamed *España* in 1931. Sunk by mine off Santander, 30 April 1937
Jaime I		February 1912	September 1914	December 1921	Destroyed by explosion, Cartagena, 17 June 1937
Note: A third ship in the class, the original *España*, was wrecked off Melilla in 1923.					

Ships-in-class (2): *España, Jaime I*	
Displacement	15,700 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 139.9m (459ft); beam: 24m (78ft 8in); draught: 7.8m (25ft 6in)
Propulsion	four shafts, powered by four Parsons steam turbines and 12 Yarrow boilers, generating 15,500shp
Maximum speed	19½ knots
Fuel capacity	1,900 tons (coal)
Range	5,000 miles at 10 knots
Armament	8 x 30.5cm (12in) guns in four twin turrets, 20 x 10.2cm (4in) guns in single mounts, 2 x 7.6cm (3in) and 4 x 4.79cm (1.8in) AA guns, all in single mounts
Armour	main belt: 12.5–23cm (5–9in); deck: 2.5–5cm (1–2in); barbettes: 14–25cm (5.5–9.8in); turrets: 23.4cm (9.2in); casemates: 7.5cm (3in); conning tower: 25cm (9.8in)
Aircraft	none
Complement	854
Note: In July 1936, *España* only had two operable turrets ('A' and 'D') and was missing eight secondary guns. Her remaining 4in guns were added in September 1936, and 'C' turret was made operational in October. At the same time, she received 4 x 8.8cm (3.5in) and 2 x 20mm AA guns, all in single mounts. *Jaime I* also lacked four secondary guns. These were installed in October 1936, together with four single 4.7cm and one twin 2.5cm AA guns.	



The España class battleships were described as either the smallest dreadnoughts in the world, or the best-protected coastal-defence ships afloat. Although obsolete by the standards of the late 1930s, the *Jaime I*, pictured here in 1931, was still a powerful warship and the mainstay of the Spanish Republican fleet.

A single-barrelled 40mm (2-pdr) low-velocity anti-aircraft gun, supplied by Vickers, mounted amidships in a Canarias-class cruiser. These were hand-elevated and fired, had a maximum elevation of 70 degrees, and an effective range of 1,000m.

The crew of the Nationalist heavy cruiser *Baleares*, assembled on the ship's forecastle in late December 1936. The cruiser joined the fleet without her two after 20.3cm turrets.

Cruisers
Canarias class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Canarias	El Ferrol	August 1928	May 1931	September 1936	Broken up, 1977
Baleares		August 1928	April 1931	December 1936	Torpedoed and sunk off Cartagena, 6 March 1938

Ships-in-class (2): *Canarias, Baleares*	
Displacement	13,496 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 193.9m (636ft 2in); beam: 19.52m (64ft 1in); draught: 6.51m (21ft 4in)
Propulsion	four shafts, powered by four Parsons geared turbines and eight Yarrow boilers, generating 90,000shp
Maximum speed	33 knots
Fuel capacity	2,588 tons (fuel oil)
Range	8,000 miles at 15 knots
Armament	8 x 20.3cm (8in) guns in four twin turrets, 4 x 12cm (4.7in) AA guns in single mounts, 4 x 10cm (4in) Oto and 4 x 8.8cm (3.5in) AA guns, all in single mounts (*Baleares* only), 4 x 40mm (2-pdr) 'pom-poms' in single mounts (six in *Baleares*), 4 x 20mm AA guns in single mounts (*Canarias* only)
Armour	main belt: 5.1cm (2in); deck: 2.5–3.8cm (1–1.5in); magazines: 7.6–11.4cm (3–4.5in); turrets and conning tower: 2.5cm (1in)
Aircraft	Designed to carry catapult and two aircraft, but these were never fitted
Complement	780
Note: Twelve 53.3cm (21in) torpedo launchers were fitted, in four fixed arc triple mounts, but no torpedoes were ever installed. When both ships first entered service, they lacked any secondary or smaller guns, or a fire control system. *Baleares* also had no 'C' turret, carrying a wooden dummy one instead. The missing turret and her complete fire control suite was added in January 1937, together with fire control, and her remaining guns were added between June and November 1937. *Canarias* received her fire control system and remaining guns between November 1936 and March 1937.	

The crew of the Nationalist cruiser *Canarias* rigging an awning over the ship's quarterdeck, while lying alongside the quayside in Palma, during late 1937. This port in Majorca provided the Nationalists with a useful forward base in the Western Mediterranean.

Principe Alfonso class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Libertad (formerly *Principe Alfonso*)	El Ferrol	February 1917	July 1922	August 1925 (as *Principe Alfonso*)	Renamed *Libertad* in 1931. Broken up, 1970
Almirante Cervera		November 1922	October 1925	May 1927	Broken up, 1966
Miguel de Cervantes		August 1926	May 1929	February 1930	Broken up, 1964

Ships-in-class (3): *Libertad, Almirante Cervera, Miguel de Cervantes*	
Displacement	9,384 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 176.6m (579ft 6in); beam: 16.46m (54ft); draught: 5.05m (16ft 6in)
Propulsion	four shafts, powered by four Parsons geared turbines and eight Yarrow boilers, generating 80,000shp
Maximum speed	33 knots
Fuel capacity	1,675 tons (fuel oil)
Range	5,000 miles at 15 knots
Armament	8 x 15.2cm (6in) guns in two single and three twin turrets, 4 x 10.2cm (4in) and 2 x 4.7cm (1.8in) AA guns, all in in single mounts, twelve 53.3cm (21in) torpedoes in four triple mounts
Armour	main belt: 2.5–7.6cm (1.5–3in); deck: 2.5–5cm (1–2in); gun shields: 1.3cm (0.5in); conning tower: 15.2cm (6in)
Aircraft	none
Complement	564
Note: *Libertad*: 8 x 1.3cm (0.5in) machine guns in twin mounts added in November 1936. *Almirante Cervera*: missing her secondary armament in 1936. 1 x 20mm AA gun added in November 1936, and missing 4 x 10.2cm guns added the following April, together with 4 x German 10.5cm (4.1in) guns, all in single mounts, as well as 4 x 47mm and 3 x 20mm AA guns, also all in single mounts.	

Mendez Nuñez class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Mendez Nuñez	El Ferrol	September 1917	March 1923	May 1925	Broken up, 1963
Note: A second ship in the class, the *Blas de Lezo*, was wrecked off Cape Finisterre in 1932.					

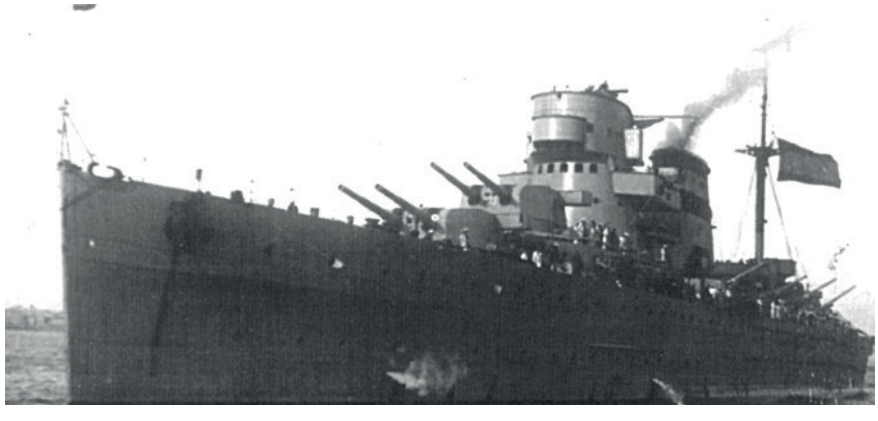
Vickers 47mm (3-pdr) L50 anti-aircraft gun, mounted on the port after superstructure of the Republican cruiser *Mendez Nuñez*, 1937. It was manually operated, had an effective range of about 1,800m, and a rate of fire of up to 25 rounds a minute.

Ships-in-class (1): *Mendez Nuñez*	
Displacement	6,045 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 140.8m (462ft); beam: 14.1m (46ft 3in); draught: 4.4m (14ft 4in)
Propulsion	four shafts, powered by four Parsons geared turbines and 12 Yarrow boilers, generating 45,000shp
Maximum speed	29 knots
Fuel capacity	787 tons (coal), 492 tons (fuel oil)
Range	5,000 miles at 13 knots
Armament	6 x 15.2cm (6in) guns in single turrets, 1 x 7.6cm (3in) and 4 x 47mm AA guns, all in single mounts, 12 x 53.3cm (21in) torpedoes in four triple mounts
Armour	main belt: 4.4–7.6cm (1.75–3in); deck: 2.5cm (1in); conning tower: 15.2cm (6in)
Aircraft	none
Complement	343
Note: Half her boilers were oil-fired, and half coal-fired. She was considered old and worn-out in 1936, and her guns were limited to a range of just 12,000m. In late 1936 she received two additional 47mm AA guns, followed by two more in January 1939, together with 3 x 20mm Oerlikons.	

Reina Victoria Eugenia class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Republica (formerly *Reina Victoria Eugenia*)	El Ferrol	March 1915	April 1920	January 1923 (as *Reina Victoria Eugenia*)	Renamed *Republica* in 1931, and *Navarra* in 1938. Broken up, 1956.

Ships-in-class (1): *Republica*	
Displacement	6,449 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 140.8m (462ft); beam: 15.23m (50ft); draught: 4.8m (15ft 8in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Parsons steam turbines and 12 Yarrow boilers, generating 25,500shp. As *Navarra* (1938): two shafts, two Parsons geared turbines and eight Yarrow boilers, generating 25,500shp
Maximum speed	25½ knots; *Navarra*: 25 knots
Fuel capacity	660 tons (coal); *Navarra*: 1,215 tons (fuel oil)
Range	3,500 miles at 11 knots; *Navarra*: 4,000 miles at 11 knots
Armament	9 x 15.2cm (6in) guns in single turrets, 1 x 7.6cm (3in) AA gun, 4 x 47mm AA guns in single mounts, 4 x 53.3cm (21in) torpedoes in two fixed twin mounts. As *Navarra*: 6 x 15.2cm (6in) guns in single mounts, 4 x 8.8cm (3.5in) and 4 x 20mm AA guns, all on single mounts
Armour	main belt: 4.4–7.6cm (1.75–3in); deck: 2.5cm (1in); conning tower: 15.2cm (6in)
Aircraft	none
Complement	405; *Navarra*: 455
Note: *Republica* was mothballed in Cádiz in 1935, and fell into Nationalist hands the following July. She was disarmed, and her guns employed in coastal defences. Then, in July 1937, she was towed to El Ferrol for an extensive rebuilding. She re-emerged in June 1938 as the *Navarra*, with two rather than three funnels, powered by oil-fired boilers and with a new modern armament.	



The Nationalist heavy cruiser *Baleares*, pictured off Palma in 1937. At this angle, her anti-aircraft battery amidships is clearly visible. Both she and her sister ship carried four Vickers-Armstrong 12cm/L40 anti-aircraft guns on each beam.

Destroyers
Alsedo class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Alsedo	Cartagena	May 1920	October 1922	August 1924	Broken up, 1957
Velasco		July 1920	June 1923	December 1924	Broken up, 1957
Lazaga		October 1920	March 1924	August 1925	Broken up, 1961

Ships-in-class (3) and hull ID marking: *Alsedo* (A), *Velasco* (V), *Lazaga* (L)	
Displacement	1,337 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 86.8m (284ft 8in); beam: 8.23m (27ft); draught: 4.5m (14ft 9in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by twoParsons geared turbines and four Yarrow boilers, generating 33,000shp
Maximum speed	34 knots
Fuel capacity	272 tons (fuel oil)
Range	2,500 miles at 15 knots
Armament	3 x 10.2cm (4in) guns in single mounts, 2 x 47mm AA guns in single mounts, 4 x 53.3cm (21in) torpedoes in two twin mounts. Potential to carry up to 60 mines
Complement	86
Note: In mid-1938 1 x 20mm AA gun was added to *Velasco*'s armament.	

Churruca class (Batch 1)

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Sánchez Barcáiztegui	Cartagena	April 1924	July 1926	September 1928	Broken up, 1964
Almirante Ferrándiz		September 1927	May 1928	August 1929	Sunk, 29 September 1936
José Luis Díez		November 1927	August 1928	September 1929	Broken up, 1965
Lepanto		July 1928	November 1929	August 1930	Broken up, 1957
Churruca		January 1929	June 1929	May 1931	Broken up, 1963
Alcalá Galiano		May 1929	December 1929	September 1931	Broken up, 1957
Almirante Valdéz		February 1930	September 1930	March 1933	Broken up, 1957

Ships-in-class (7) and hull ID marking: *Sánchez Barcáiztegui* (SB), *Almirante Ferrándiz* (AF), *José Luis Díez* (DZ), *Lepanto* (LO), *Churruca* (CH), *Alcalá Galiano* (AG), *Almirante Valdéz* (VS)	
Displacement	2,087 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 101.5m (333ft); beam: 9.68m (31ft 9in); draught: 3.2m (10ft 6in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Parsons geared turbines and four Yarrow boilers, generating 42,000shp
Maximum speed	36 knots
Fuel capacity	500 tons (fuel oil)
Range	4,000 miles at 14 knots
Armament	5 x 12cm (4.7in) guns in single mounts, 1 x 7.6cm (3in) AA gun in single mount, 2 x 7.7mm (0.3in) AA machine guns in single mounts, 6 x 53.3cm (21in) torpedoes in two triple mounts
Complement	175
Note: In 1938 *José Luis Díez* received 2 x 25mm AA guns in a twin mount, plus two single 40mm and two single 20mm AA guns. *Almirante Valdéz* was given a 1 x 40mm AA gun, and *Churruca* and *Lepanto* 1 x 25mm AA gun.	

The Churruca class destroyer *Gravina*, pictured shortly after the war, by which stage she had been fitted with funnel caps. Like all but one of the destroyers in this batch, the *Gravina* was fitting out in Cartagena when the rising began. She joined the fleet in August 1936.

Churruca class (Batch 2)

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Almirante Antequera	Cartagena	August 1930	December 1930	May 1935	Broken up, 1965
Almirante Miranda		January 1931	June 1931	July 1936	Broken up, 1970
Gravina		June 1931	December 1931	August 1936	Broken up, 1963
Escaño		December 1931	June 1932	September 1936	Broken up, 1963
Ciscar		April 1932	October 1933	October 1936	Wrecked, 1957
Jorge Juan		September 1932	March 1933	August 1937	Broken up, 1959
Ulloa		January 1933	May 1933	November 1937	Broken up, 1963

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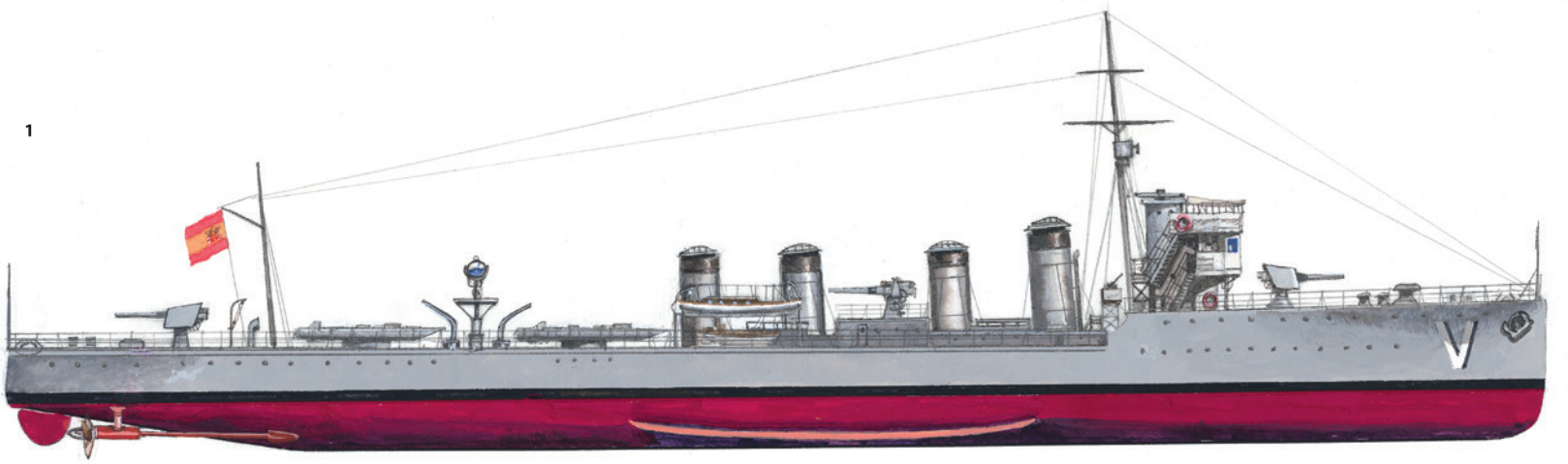
THE NATIONALISTS: DESTROYER *VELASCO* AND GUNBOAT-MINELAYER *JÚPITER*

1. The *Velasco* was one of the three destroyers that made up the Alsedo class. They resembled the British Lightfoot class of flotilla leaders, a successful wartime design which was replicated by the Spanish, albeit with some engine modifications. These vessels though, only entered service in 1924–25, by which time they were considered obsolete. Still, after July 1936, when the *Velasco* was captured in El Ferrol, this little destroyer served the Nationalists well. Her two sisters *Alsedo* and *Lazaga* served in the Republican Navy. She saw service off the northern Spanish coast, in the Strait of Gibraltar, and in the Western Mediterranean, making her probably the most active destroyer of the war. This view of her depicts the *Velasco* while she was operating off the Cantabrian coast in early 1937, serving as the consort of the battleship *España*. In fact she was so active that the Nationalists made good use of her distinctive four-funneled appearance, disguising two Melilla class destroyers gifted by Italy to resemble the *Velasco*, in order to make this illegal foreign aid less obvious.

2. When the war began, a class of four dual-purpose gunboats and minelayers were under construction in El Ferrol. The *Júpiter*, namesake of this class, was the only one which had been launched at the time, and so the Nationalists quickly fitted her out and brought her into service. Two more would be commissioned before the end of the war. The *Júpiter* was a well-armed, modern gunboat, and so was immediately pressed into service as an escort vessel. Her minelaying capacity though, made her a versatile asset for the Nationalists. In this view of her, showing her as she looked while operating in the Western Mediterranean in 1938–39, her mine loading hatches on her hull sides are clearly visible. Her mine deck could hold up to 264 mines, which were laid through four discharge doors at her stern.

1



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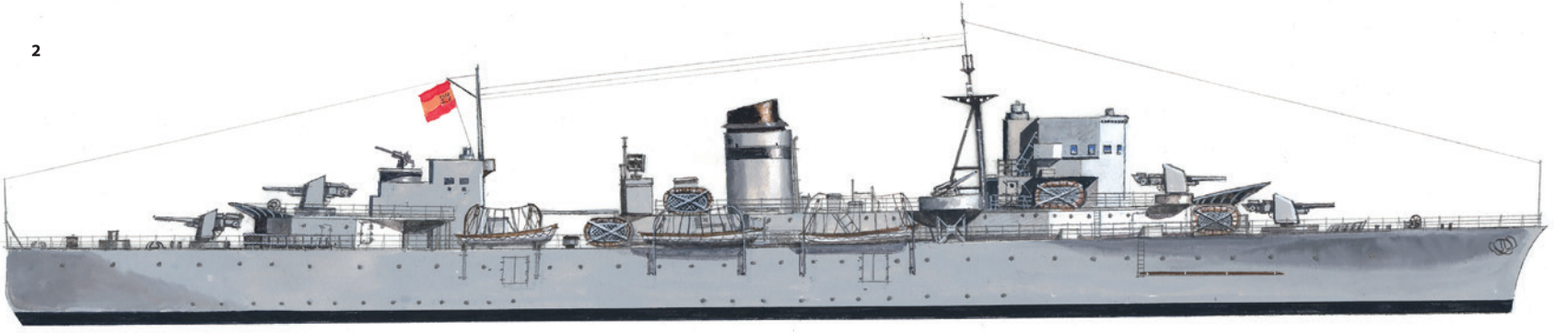

Ships-in-class (7) and hull ID marking: *Almirante Antequera* (AA), *Almirante Miranda* (AM), *Gravina (*GA), *Escaño* (EO), *Ciscar* (CR), *Jorge Juan* (JJ), *Ulloa* (UA)	
Displacement	2,175 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 101.5m (333ft); beam: 9.68m (31ft 9in); draught: 3.2m (10ft 6in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Parsons geared turbines and four Yarrow boilers, generating 42,000shp
Maximum speed	36 knots
Fuel capacity	540 tons (fuel oil)
Range	4,000 miles at 14 knots
Armament	*Gravina*, *Jorge Juan*, *Ulloa*: 4 x 10.2cm (4in) guns in single mounts (5 guns in GA), 1 x 7.6cm (3in) AA gun, 6 x 53.3cm (21in) torpedoes in two triple launchers
	all others: 4 x 12cm (4.7in) guns in single mounts, 1 x 7.6cm (3in) AA gun (2 guns in *Almirante Miranda*)
Complement	175
Note: With only a few minor exceptions these vessels were identical to the Batch 1 vessels. They could, however, be told apart as the Batch 2 destroyers had rounded bridge fronts, tripod foremasts, and their main guns were given complete rather than partial gun shields. They also carried four main guns rather than five, to reduce topweight. *Gravina*, *Escaño*, *Ulloa*, *Jorge Juan* and *Ciscar* were still being fitted out when the conflict began. In 1938, *Ulloa* received 2 x 25mm AA guns in a twin mount and both she and the *Jorge Juan* had their main guns replaced by 12cm weapons.	

Melilla class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Re-commissioned	Fate
Melilla (formerly *Falco*)	Naples, Italy	March 1914	July 1916	February 1917	October 1937	Broken up, 1949
Ceuta (formerly *Aquila*)		August 1916	August 1919	January 1920		Broken up, 1947

Ships-in-class (2): *Melilla, Ceuta*	
Displacement	1,723 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 94.7m (310ft 6in); beam: 9.47m (31ft); draught: 3.5m (9ft 2in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Tosi steam turbines and five Thornycroft boilers, generating 45,000shp
Maximum speed	34 knots
Fuel capacity	260 tons (fuel oil)
Range	1,700 miles at 15 knots
Armament	4 x 12cm (4.7in) guns in single mounts, 2 x 7.6cm (3in) AA guns in single mounts, 2 x 7.7mm (0.3in) AA machine guns in single mounts, 4 x 45cm (18in) torpedoes in two twin mounts. Capable of carrying up to 50 mines
Complement	160
Note: These destroyers were originally ordered by Romania before World War I, and then added to the Italian fleet when it entered the war. Two others were eventually returned to Romania, but these were retained until October 1937, when they were renamed and transferred to the Nationalist navy. To confuse the Republicans, they both usually operated under the name *Velasco*, and so were sometimes known as *Velasco Melilla* or *Velasco Ceuta*. For the same reason they often sported a fourth dummy funnel during the conflict.	

Huesca class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Re-commissioned	Fate
Huesca (formerly *Alessandro Poerpio*)	Naples, Italy	March 1913	August 1914	May 1915	October 1937	Broken up, 1953
Teruel (formerly *Gugliemo Pepe*)		July 1913	September 1914	August 1915		Broken up, 1947

Ships-in-class (2): *Huesca, Teruel*	
Displacement	1,216 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 85m (278ft 10in); beam: 8m (26ft 3in); draught: 2.8m (9ft 2in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Beluzzo steam turbines and three Yarrow boilers, generating 20,000shp
Maximum speed	31½ knots
Fuel capacity	200 tons (fuel oil)
Range	2,100 miles at 13 knots
Armament	5 x 10.2cm (4in) guns in single mounts (6 guns in *Teruel*), 1 x 40mm AA gun in single mount, 2 x 13.2mm (0.5in) AA machine guns in single mounts, 4 x 45cm (18in) torpedoes in two twin mounts. Capable of carrying up to 42 mines
Complement	137
Note: These obsolete Italian destroyers were transferred to the Nationalist navy in October 1937. In early 1938 both ships received 2 x 20mm AA guns, while *Teruel* was fitted with an additional 40mm gun. After the two destroyers collided with each other in May 1938, they were laid up in Cádiz until the end of the conflict.	

Submarines

B class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
B1	Cartagena	February 1917	June 1921	February 1922	Broken up, 1941
B2		August 1917	October 1921	June 1922	Broken up, 1951
B3		January 1920	March 1922	August 1922	Broken up, 1940
B4		May 1920	October 1922	May 1923	Broken up, 1941
B5		January 1921	January 1925	December 1925	Sunk by Nationalist aircraft off Gibraltar, 12 October 1936
B6		September 1921	June 1925	January 1926	Sunk by Nationalist destroyer *Velasco* off Gijón, 19 September 1936

Ships-in-class (6): B1–B6	
Displacement	740 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 64.2m (210ft 7in); beam: 5.6m (18ft 5in); draught: 3.4m (11ft 4in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Nelseco diesel engines, generating 1,400hp, and two electric motors generating 420hp
Maximum speed	16 knots (surface), 10½ knots (submerged)
Maximum Dive Depth	60m (197ft)
Fuel capacity	81 tons (diesel)
Range	8,000 miles at 10½ knots (surface), 125 miles at 4½ knots (submerged)
Armament	4 x 45cm (18in) torpedo tubes (two bow, two stern), eight torpedoes carried
Complement	28
Note: All served with the Republican Navy. From late 1937, B1 and B2 were mothballed in Cartagena due to mechanical problems. In December 1936, B3 was damaged in a collision with a merchant ship, and B4 damaged by Nationalist aircraft in Málaga. Both boats were then mothballed in Cartagena. B1–B4 were all scuttled in March 1939, then subsequently raised and refitted.	

C class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
C1	Cartagena	July 1923	March 1927	July 1928	Renamed C1 *Isaac Peral* in 1931 Broken up, 1950
C2		September 1923	March 1928	July 1928	Broken up, 1951
C3		May 1924	February 1929	May 1929	Torpedoed and sunk off Málaga by German *U-34*, 12 December 1936
C4		May 1924	July 1929	September 1929	Lost in collision, 1956
C5		October 1924	October 1929	April 1930	Lost in accident off Bilbao, 30 December 1936
C6		February 1925	December 1929	September 1930	Scuttled off Gijón, 20 October 1937. Raised in 1948 and broken up

Ships-in-class (6): C1–C6	
Displacement	1,143 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 75.3m (247ft); beam: 6.33m (20ft 10in); draught: 4.12m (13ft 6in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Vickers diesel engines, generating 2,000hp, and two electric motors generating 750hp
Maximum speed	16½ knots (surface), 8½ knots (submerged)
Maximum dive depth	90m (295ft)
Fuel capacity	150 tons (diesel)
Range	6,800 miles at 10 knots (surface), 150 miles at 4½ knots (submerged)
Armament	1 x 7.6cm (3in) gun, 6 x 53.3cm (21in) torpedo tubes (4 bow, 2 stern), 10 torpedoes carried
Complement	40
Note: All served with the Republican Navy. In 1938, a twin 1.37cm (0.5in) machine gun was added to C4. On 9 September 1938 C1 *Isaac Peral* was sunk at Cartagena by Nationalist aircraft, then salvaged. She was still undergoing repairs in Barcelona when captured by Nationalists. On 5 March 1939, C2 was captured in Cartagena by pro-Nationalist insurgents, and sailed to Palma.	

General Mola class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Transferred and renamed	Fate
General Mola (formerly Italian *Evangelista Torricelli*)	Taranto, Italy	October 1931	May 1934	December 1934 as *Evangelista Torricelli*	April 1937	Broken up, 1959
General Sanjurjo (formerly Italian *Archimede*)			December 1933	August 1934 as *Archimede*		
General Mola II (formerly Italian *Galileo Galilei*)			March 1934	October 1934 as *Galileo Galilei*	October 1936	Returned to Italy, January 1938
General Sanjurjo II (formerly Italian *Galileo Ferraris*)			August 1934	January 1935 as *Galileo Ferraris*		

Ships-in-class (4): *General Mola, General Sanjurjo, General Mola II, General Sanjurjo II*	
Displacement	1,239 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 70.5m (231ft 4in); beam: 6.87m (22ft 6in); draught: 4.12m (13ft 6in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Tosi diesel engines, generating 3,000hp, and two electric motors generating 1,100hp
Maximum speed	17 knots (surface), 8 knots (submerged)
Maximum dive depth	90m (295ft)
Fuel capacity	100 tons (diesel)
Range	6,800 miles at 10 knots (surface), 150 miles at 4½ knots (submerged)
Armament	2 x 10cm (3.9in) guns in single mounts, 8 x 53.3cm (21in) torpedo tubes (4 bow, 4 stern), 16 torpedoes carried
Complement	55
Note: All Archimedes class submarines in the Italian Navy, serving with the Italian submarine 'Legion' from late 1936 onwards. Subsequently transferred to the Nationalist Navy. Until August 1936, for reasons of subterfuge, *General Mola* and *General Sanjurno* used fictitious names C3 and C5 (respectively). In September 1937, both boats returned to Taranto for repairs, and the following month two more Archimedes class boats (*Galileo Galilei* and *Galileo Ferraris*) were temporarily lent to the Nationalists to replace them, and given temporary Nationalist names. They retained their Italian crew, save for a token handful of Nationalist submariners. These two boats were returned to Italian service the following January after the refit of *General Mola* and *General Sanjurno* was completed.	

Aguilar Tablada class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Transferred and renamed	Fate
González Lópéz (formerly Italian *Iride*)	Muggiano, Italy	September 1935	July 1936	November 1936 as *Iride*	October 1937	Returned to Italy, January 1938
Aguilar Tablada (formerly Italian *Onice*)		August 1935	June 1936	September 1936 as *Onice*		

Ships-in-class (2): *González López, Aguilar Tablada*	
Displacement	844 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 60.2m (197ft 6in); beam: 6.45m (21ft 2in); draught: 4.7m (15ft 5in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Fiat diesel engines, generating 1,200hp, and two electric motors generating 800hp
Maximum speed	14 knots (surface), 7½ knots (submerged)
Maximum dive depth	80m (262ft)
Fuel capacity	80 tons (diesel)
Range	2,500 miles at 12 knots (surface), 74 miles at 4 knots (submerged)
Armament	1 x 10cm (3.9in) gun, 1 x twin 1.37cm (0.5in) machine gun, 6 x 53.3cm (21in) torpedo tubes (4 bow, 2 stern), 12 torpedoes carried
Complement	45
Note: Both Perla class submarines in the Italian Navy, serving with the Italian submarine 'Legion' from late 1936 on. Temporarily transferred to the Nationalist Navy from October 1937 to January 1938. During this period they retained their Italian crew, save for a token handful of Nationalist submariners.	

Gunboats

Recalde class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Lauria	Cartagena	December 1910	April 1912	August 1912	Broken up, 1940
Laya		November 1909	August 1911	December 1911	Sunk off Valencia by Nationalist aircraft, 15 June 1938
Note: Two other ships in class (*Recalde*, *Bonifaz*) were scrapped in 1931					

Ships-in-class (2): *Lauria, Laya*	
Displacement	811 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 65.5m (214ft 10in); beam: 9.14m (29ft 11in); draught:2.98m (9ft 9in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two VTE steam turbines and two Yarrow boilers, generating 1,200shp
Maximum speed	13½ knots
Fuel capacity	160 tons (coal)
Range	3,000 miles at 10 knots
Armament	4 x 7.6cm (3in) guns in single mounts
Complement	130
Note: In July 1936, *Lauria* was seized in Cádiz by the Nationalists, while *Laya* remained in Republican service. In mid-1937, *Laya* received an additional single 20mm AA gun. She was salvaged in 1940, then broken up.	

Castillo class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Cánovas del Castillo	Cartagena	February 1921	January 1922	December 1923	Broken up, 1959
Canalejas		June 1921	December 1922	September 1924	Broken up, 1951
Dato		April 1922	July 1923	May 1925	Broken up, 1953

Ships-in-class (3): *Cánovas del Castillo, Canalejas, Dato*	
Displacement	1,335 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 77.3m (253ft 7in); beam: 10.2m (33ft 6in); draught: 3.42m (11ft 3in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two VTE steam turbines and two Yarrow boilers, generating 1,700shp
Maximum speed	15 knots
Fuel capacity	324 tons (coal)
Range	6,500 miles at 10½ knots
Armament	4 x 10.2cm (4in) guns in single mounts, 2 x 47mm AA guns in single mounts
Complement	132
Note: All served with the Nationalist fleet. On 7 August 1936, *Dato* was sunk by gunfire in Algeciras, but salvaged. All rebuilt in 1937–38, and received a 2 x 7.6cm (3in) gun in lieu of their 10.2cm guns, plus 3 x single 20mm AA guns.	

Júpiter class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Júpiter	El Ferrol	February 1935	September 1935	March 1937	Broken up, 1974
Vulcano			October 1935	August 1937	Broken up, 1977
Marte		November 1935	June 1936	November 1938	Broken up, 1971
Neptuno			December 1937	November 1939	Broken up, 1972

Ships-in-class (4): *Júpiter, Vulcano, Marte, Neptuno*	
Displacement	2,600 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 96m (314ft 11in); beam: 12.7m (41ft 8in); draught: 3.5m (11ft 5in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Parsons geared turbines and four Yarrow boilers, generating 10,000shp
Maximum speed	18½ knots
Fuel capacity	280 tons (fuel oil)
Range	3,700 miles at 12 knots
Armament	4 x 12cm (4in) and 2 x 7.6cm (3in) guns, all in single mounts, 3 x single 20mm AA guns. (*Vulcano* carried 2 x 8.8cm (3.5in) AA guns in single mounts in lieu of her 7.6cm guns. When first commissioned, *Júpiter* carried 4 x 10.5cm (4in) guns in lieu of her 12cm pieces, and a single 40mm AA gun in lieu of 20mm ones.)
Complement	180
Note: Multi-purpose gunboats and minelayers. In July 1936 all four vessels fell into Nationalist hands in El Ferrol and, when completed, they served in the Nationalist navy. *Neptuno* though, was completed after the end of the conflict. All were capable of carrying up to 264 mines. In 1939, *Júpiter* had her 10.5cm guns replaced by 12cm pieces, and 3 single 20mm AA guns were added.	

Calvo Sotelo class

Vessel	Built	Laid Down	Launched	Completed	Fate
Calvo Sotelo (formerly Mexican *Zacatecas*)	Cádiz	November 1933	August 1934 as *Zacatecas*	August 1938 as *Calvo Sotelo*	Broken up, 1957
Note: A second ship in the class, *Durango*, was delivered to Mexico in July 1936.					

Ships-in-class (1): *Calvo Sotelo*	
Displacement	2,000 tons (deep load)
Dimensions	length: 92.4m (303ft 2in); beam: 12.2m (40ft); draught: 3.5m (11ft 6in)
Propulsion	two shafts, powered by two Parsons geared turbines and two Yarrow boilers, generating 6,500shp
Maximum speed	18½ knots
Fuel capacity	138 tons (fuel oil)
Range	3,000 miles at 15 knots
Armament	3 x 12cm (4.7in) guns in single mounts, 2 x 8.8cm AA guns in single mounts, 2 x 20mm AA guns
Complement	160
Note: Built for the Mexican Navy as a gunboat-troop transport, capable of accommodating 500 infantry and 30 horses. Still fitting out in Cádiz in May 1938, when commandeered by Nationalists, and renamed. Entered service without one of her 12cm guns and her 8.8cm guns. These were added in 1939, together with 2 x 5.7cm AA guns in single mounts.	

Smaller warships

In 1936 the Spanish Navy contained a number of obsolete T class torpedo boats, as well as a handful of auxiliary vessels. The torpedo boats were completed between 1912 and 1921, but by 1936 these were used as training vessels rather than operational warships. These craft displaced 190 tons (fully laden), were powered by coal-fired steam engines, and had a maximum speed of 25 knots. They carried 3 x 47mm guns, and 3 x 45cm (18in) torpedo tubes. However, none appear to have carried torpedoes during the conflict but were instead used as patrol craft.

The Spanish coastguard also operated three Alcázar class patrol boats (*Alcázar*, *Larache* and *Tetuán*). Built in Bordeaux in France and completed in 1922, these were earmarked for service in Spanish Morocco. They displaced 440 tons, and their coal-fired engines gave them a top speed of 11 knots. Each was armed with a single 7.6cm (3in) gun.

They also operated six Uad Kert class patrol boats (*Uad Kert*, *Arcíla*, *Xauen*, *Uad Lucus*, *Uad Martin* and *Uad Muluya*). These were British-built armed trawlers, displacing 547–666 tons, with coal-fired engines (top speed of 11 knots), and armed with a single 7.6cm (3in) gun (*Arcíla*: 2 x 7.6cm guns).

In 1936 the Spanish Navy also maintained small fishery protection patrol vessels of 150 tons, a river patrol boat deployed on the River Miño on the Portuguese border, 27 customs launches, four hydrographic survey vessels (*Artabro*, *Giralda*, *Malaspina* and *Tofiño*) and various support vessels (13 tugs, two sail training ships (*Galatea* and *Juan Sebastián de Elcano*) and the submarine rescue ship *Kanguro*). The aged *Dedaldo*, a seaplane tender, was decommissioned pending being broken up. None of these though, had any real military value.

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